

WALTER PATER: A STUDY IN LITERARY METHOD

Catherine Neale

Presented in fulfilment of the
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

University of Edinburgh

1980



Abstract of Thesis

This thesis traces the development of Pater's writing career, paying particular attention to those volumes published during his lifetime. It works from the general observations that Pater repeatedly revised his own work, that it is unsatisfactory to categorize his work in any of the conventional genres, and that his work is characterized by extensive borrowings from other writers. It argues that Pater's developing literary method draws its impetus from, and informs, the central concerns of his writing. These central concerns also reflect his own anxieties and preoccupations, and Pater's discussion of the role of the modern writer is studied. Pater's analysis in The Renaissance of his present times and of the predicament of modern man is examined, and his consequent prescriptions for modern art are shown to be reflected in his own writing, in his themes of past ages of transition and "genre" painting, and his techniques of typification and symbolism. The emphasis throughout Pater's work on the value of the past and of history, which in Imaginary Portraits he rewrites for the benefit of the nineteenth century, rebounds upon his role as writer; the development from essay to more imaginative writing is discussed in this context. The "originality" of the modern writer is necessarily in doubt, and Pater's experiments with form and his semi-autobiographical pieces are seen to be attempts at the creation of a new beginning for his own writing. The thematic concern with the concept of truth in part determines the erratic development of Pater's writing career, requiring as it does a continual self-questioning. Pater's themes and technical concerns are therefore interrelated.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, that it has been composed by myself, and that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Declaration | ii |
| Table of Contents | iii |
| Preface | v |
| Acknowledgements | vi |
| Introduction | 1 |
| I Pater's writing career: development and repetition | 9 |
| i Pater's writing career: his intentions and ideals | 10 |
| ii Some features of Pater's writing: repetition and quotation | 25 |
| II <u>The Renaissance</u> : the uses of type and biography | 47 |
| i "Diaphaneité" | 48 |
| ii The early essays | 51 |
| iii Individuality and representativeness | 76 |
| iv "Leonardo da Vinci" | 80 |
| v The type and the hero | 83 |
| vi Biography | 90 |
| III The years between: introspection, autobiography and the problem of ending | 102 |
| i Truth and sympathy | 103 |
| ii "The Child in the House" | 110 |
| iii "An English Poet" | 129 |
| iv <u>Marius the Epicurean</u> | 134 |
| IV <u>Imaginary Portraits</u> : rewriting history | 150 |
| i Mythology and art | 151 |
| ii The type and history | 157 |
| iii "A Prince of Court Painters" | 170 |
| iv "Denys l'Auxerrois" | 177 |
| v "Sebastian van Storck" | 185 |
| vi "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" | 195 |
| V <u>Imaginary Portraits</u> : the importance of "genre" paintings | 202 |
| i "The School of Giorgione" | 203 |
| ii The role of art | 210 |
| iii "A Prince of Court Painters" | 216 |
| iv "Denys l'Auxerrois" | 220 |
| v "Sebastian van Storck" | 223 |
| vi "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" | 227 |
| vii "Genre painting" | 228 |
| VI <u>Gaston de Latour</u> : Implications of symbolism | 234 |
| i From "genre" art to symbolism | 235 |
| ii <u>Gaston de Latour</u> | 240 |

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| VII | <u>Appreciations: studies in a literary heritage</u> | 267 |
| i | The position of the modern writer | 268 |
| ii | The literary essays | 278 |
| iii | The definition of modern writing | 285 |
| | Conclusion | 289 |
| | Appendix I | 293 |
| | Bibliography | 297 |

Preface

This thesis traces a broadly chronological development in Pater's literary method. I have therefore considered it appropriate to base my study, unlike most critics, on the first editions of all his texts. This is particularly important in the case of Pater for three reasons. Firstly, Pater revised his works for every edition subsequent to the first. Secondly, reprints of Pater's work are on the whole corrupt, and often silent about which edition they are based on. Thirdly, the standard 1910 Library Edition is inconsistent in the choice of copytexts.

All quotations from Pater's work are taken from the first cited edition and page numbers follow in brackets. For the sake of simplification, none of Pater's works is preceded by his name; the titles of the books are abbreviated in the first citation and a list of abbreviations follows on this page.

| | |
|------------|---|
| <u>App</u> | <u>Appreciations: With an Essay on Style</u> |
| <u>EG</u> | <u>Essays from 'The Guardian'</u> |
| <u>GL</u> | <u>Gaston de Latour: An Unfinished Romance</u> |
| <u>GS</u> | <u>Greek Studies: A Series of Essays</u> |
| <u>IP</u> | <u>Imaginary Portraits</u> |
| <u>LWP</u> | <u>Letters of Walter Pater</u> , ed Lawrence Evans |
| <u>ME</u> | <u>Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas</u> |
| <u>MS</u> | <u>Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays</u> |
| <u>PP</u> | <u>Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures</u> |
| <u>Ren</u> | <u>The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry</u> |
| <u>SHR</u> | <u>Studies in the History of the Renaissance</u> |

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor W.W. Robson who has given me his time and help throughout the preparation of this thesis, and whose comments have helped to clarify my ideas at crucial moments. Professor K.J. Fielding has also offered encouragement and advice at certain points.

I also wish to thank the Librarians and staff of the following libraries for their aid: Edinburgh University Library, the National Library of Scotland, the Bodleian Library and the British Library. I am also grateful to Mrs Ingeborg Peter for typing my manuscript.

Finally, my greatest debt is to my husband, Roderick Mengham, for his unfailing support and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

Walter Pater wrote about many concerns that are still relevant to us: about the confusion and unease of modern man, his feelings of isolation, about the questions of exactly what culture is and how the past can help us, about the value of art in a world that may seem monopolised by science. What have always posed a problem for his critics are the forms he uses to express these concerns. Pater's work presents the reader with a bewildering array of diverse forms which are often apparently misused or mishandled. Ian Fletcher begins his monograph on Pater by saying:

The modern critic is often suspicious of any work which falls outside fairly strict categories: how can he compare such works with others and 'place' them with a suitable conviction? This difficulty applies to Pater with peculiar force. His work seems to lie in a twilight of categories between criticism and creation; between art and literary criticism, belles lettres, classical scholarship, the journal intime and the philosophic novel. Few readers are sufficiently catholic to judge him, not simply as a critic of art or of literature, but as something at once more or less than these things.¹

However, in order to talk about any work of art, we need to have some sense of the formal premises upon which it has been based.² Genre has the function of conveying meaning to the reader. The specific genre of a work of art determines how we read and understand it. A sense of genre enables us to read, say, Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and D H Lawrence's The Rainbow with some informed understanding of their differences, guarding us from misinterpretation on a basic level and from inappropriate value judgments. Robert Scholes points out that generic criticism makes possible "the comparative evaluation of works in the same tradition" (p 101, my emphasis).

¹ Walter Pater (Harlow: Longman, 1971), p 3; see also U.C. Knoepfelmacher, Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel: George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Samuel Butler (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1965), pp. 169-70.

² Robert Scholes, "Towards a Poetics of Fiction: 4) An Approach through Genre", Novel, 11, 2 (Winter 1969), 101-11.

Recently, considerable attention has been paid to the reader's role in Pater's work.³ It is important because the very vagueness of genre places the reader in a position of insecurity. (This may well be a reason why Pater is unpopular and considered opaque by many readers). Classification has therefore often occupied Pater's critics. Marius the Epicurean frequently causes the creation of a "sub-genre" of the novel: the "novel of ideas" or the "philosophic novel".⁴ This is the danger of too much attention to genre which Professor Fletcher warns against, for imposed classification inevitably creates misunderstanding and inappropriate value judgments.

To develop an overall sense of Pater's work, then, requires a different approach, distinct from both Professor Fletcher's "catholicity" and from a rigid generical stance. The fact remains, however, that all critical procedure needs some unity from which to work. Therefore whenever a critic comments upon the "twilight of categories" in which Pater's work resides, he goes on to say that his work is unified by his temperament or personality. For example, Anthony Ward says, "what everyone does agree on is that his writings reflect his personality - that their main subject matter is Pater himself".⁵

³ For example, Edwin Frank Block, Jr., "The Transition to Modernism: The Reader's Role in Selected Works of Walter Pater, Arthur Symonds, W.B. Yeats, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal", (Diss., Stanford Univ., 1975).

⁴ See Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (London: Cape, 1921), pp. 195-6; R.S. Crane, "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones", Perspectives on Fiction, ed. J.L. Calderwood and H.E. Toliver (New York: OUP, 1968), pp. 303-18.

⁵ Walter Pater: The Idea in Nature (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1966), pp. 19-20.

To his contemporaries, Pater was a mysterious figure; to his friends, an intensely private man. And to Max Beerbohm, for example, the mystery was compounded by the disjunction between the appearance and demeanour of the man, and the passionate messages he read in the work:

In the year of grace 1890, and in the beautiful autumn of that year, I was a freshman at Oxford. I remember how my tutor asked me what lectures I wished to attend, and how he laughed when I said that I wished to attend the lectures of Mr Walter Pater. Also I remember how, one morning soon after, I went into Ryman's to order some foolish engraving for my room, and there saw, peering into a portfolio, a small, thick, rock-faced man, whose top-hat and gloves of bright dog-skin struck one of the many discords in that little city of learning or laughter. The serried bristles of his mustachio made for him a false-military air. I think I nearly went down when they told me that this was Pater.⁶

The mystery has come down to us largely undisputed. Biographies are few and unreliable. There is now probably no possibility of gaining a clearer knowledge of the man, if indeed we were to wish it.

Consequently, there has been a trend to read Pater's work completely as a subjective testament, as the autobiographical revelation of a timid man.⁷ While the subjectivity of Pater's work, and its function as a mask for the man, are not in question here, they have been used as the basis of a critical interpretation too often - because of the critic's need for a unifying schema from which to work. They lead one along a dangerous path towards biographical inference. Pater's work is not totally autobiographical, nor does it betray the fantasies of an inhibited Victorian to any marked degree. W.W. Robson sets forth the same situation with regard to Kipling:

⁶ Diminuendo, reprinted in Writing of the 'Nineties, from Wilde to Beerbohm, ed. Derek Stanford (London: Dent, 1971), pp. 47-8.

⁷ The worst and most recent example of this is Michael Levey's book, The Case of Walter Pater (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978).

Kipling never wrote a line of prose or verse for the purpose of 'expressing his personality'. As Something of Myself makes plain, he maintained a reticence about his private thoughts and feelings which modern readers may think old-fashioned, and in his personal life he clung to privacy with all the determination of Tennyson. His theory of art, furthermore, was 'classical' and 'impersonal'... Yet no author is more strongly personal than Kipling. When we think of his books, what comes to mind is not this or that character, ... but Kipling himself; not the biographical personality, but the typical composite of anecdote, reminiscence, and photograph with the vaguer but still more powerful impressions drawn from his writing, which makes up what we call 'the man behind the work!'. And it is this personality-pattern, holding the work together, which must ultimately be the subject for any general criticism of Kipling. But this does not mean that the critic is necessarily concerned with biographical inference. For one thing, this is so risky. We know very little of people, even when they are there to be studied, and though no doubt Kipling was a 'human case', like everyone else, it is surely unwise to interpret his art by evidence much of which must be fragmentary and conjectural, and which is anyway mostly available only in the artistic treatment Kipling gave to it. External reference can be misleading, even where the basis of the fiction is certainly autobiographical, since it may make us overlook interpretations of the story in question which do not happen to fit in with the imaginary biography we have in mind.⁸

We cannot, and no-one would wish to, dismiss the subjectivity in Pater's writing. However, we must work from what Pater says, rather than from what we think his words suggest about the man.

The approach in this thesis is through the development of Pater's writing career. It is therefore a combination of the chronological and the thematic. The method of biographical inference has frequently led to a discernment of vast changes of direction at several points during his career, supported by claims about Pater's attitude towards religion drawn mainly from Thomas Wright's biography.⁹ But the works themselves do not bear witness to sudden changes of belief or philosophy: instead,

⁸ "Kipling's Later Stories", in Kipling's Mind and Art, ed. Andrew Rutherford (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), p. 255.

⁹ Thomas Wright's biography, The Life of Walter Pater, 2 vols., (London: Everett, 1907), has been the subject of much disagreement, scorn and silent indebtedness. See for example, Fletcher and Levey.

it is a slow and logical development of thought that is discernible. Generic criticism, in the case of Pater, cannot elucidate or evaluate this development; a tracing of the sequence of his work can.

My reading of the works of Pater is supported by a study of Pater's correspondence, lists of books he borrowed from libraries in Oxford, and the publishing dates of his essays.¹⁰ As René Wellek and Austin Warren say,

If used with a sense of these distinctions, there is use in biographical study. First, no doubt, it has exegetical value: it may explain a great many allusions or even words in an author's work. The biographical framework will also help us in studying the most obvious of all strictly developmental problems in the history of literature -- the growth, maturing, and possible decline of an author's art. Biography also accumulates the materials for other questions of literary history such as the reading of the poet, his personal associations with literary men, his travels, the landscape and cities he saw and lived in: all of them questions which may throw light on literary history, i.e. the tradition in which the poet was placed, the influences by which he was shaped, the materials on which he drew.

Whatever the importance of biography in these respects, however, it seems dangerous to ascribe to it any specifically critical importance. No biographical evidence can change or influence critical evaluation.¹¹

From biographical data we can gather the tradition in which Pater saw himself as working, the influences upon him and the materials he used. Indeed, the development of Pater's writing career is particularly interesting because Pater writes and rewrites his own work: self-quotation

¹⁰ These have all been the result of scholarship in the last ten years, and have superseded much previous criticism on Pater. I refer especially to Lawrence Evans (ed.), Letters of Walter Pater (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), Samuel Wright, A Bibliography of the Writings of Walter H. Pater (Folkstone: Garland Publishing Inc., 1975), and "Walter Pater's Borrowings from the Queen's College Library, the Bodleian Library, the Brasenose College Library, and the Taylor Institution Library, 1860-1894," compiled by B.A. Inman, 1977. This last is in typescript and available for consultation in the Bodleian Library.

¹¹ Theory of Literature (London: Peregrine, 1963), pp. 79-80.

is rampant. His work also has pervasive quotation of, reaction from, and dependence upon other sources. He is extremely bound up with his cultural and temporal context. As we read him it is impossible to forget that he occupies a position at the end of the Oxford Movement, within the Oxford literary milieu of Jowett, Arnold, Ruskin and Mrs. Humphry Ward; that he is an heir of Romanticism, and imbued with German philosophy and French literature; that he is influenced by French symbolism; and that he lived in an age of rapid advance in geological and biological research, in the time of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. As well as being an influence on such later writers as Yeats, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot and Pound, Pater is important as a reactor to the currents of his own day.¹²

Stephen Bann recently suggested a way of tracing the works of Pater and Adrian Stokes. He says that "the 'case' for Pater is bound to be the case for Pater's writing", but concludes that Pater and Stokes are not now important for "any nebulous contribution to 'literature', in so far as that is still conceived as an amalgam of the traditional genres", "but precisely because, in the repudiation of generic divisions, they initiate what we can regard as a practice of the text".¹³ In this study I shall trace the development of Pater's ideas and the reflection of these ideas in the changing forms of his writing. Anthony Ward points out that "Pater was one of those artists, like Valéry, who are as much concerned with writing about the processes of

¹² For an examination of Pater's influence on later writers, see for example the final chapter of Gerald Monsman, Walter Pater (London: George Prior, 1977).

¹³ "The case for Stokes (and Pater)", *PN Review* 9, Vol. 6, No. 1, 6-9.

writing as they are with writing about an external subject matter".¹⁴

Even when Pater is not explicitly discussing writing, his observations affect the ways he chooses to write.

Chapter I is divided into two parts. In the first, I comment on the facts of Pater's career and development, that are available from the Letters, the reading lists, and Samuel Wright's bibliography. These are incomplete, with the probable exception of Wright; they cannot therefore form the basis of an interpretation but are used to direct this study. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss some of the features that are so immanent in Pater's writing as to become characteristic of his oeuvre.

¹⁴ op. cit., pp. 187-8.

CHAPTER I

Pater's writing career: development and repetition

the genius of which Botticelli is the type usurps the data before it as the exponents of ideas, moods, visions of its own; with this interest it plays fast and loose with those data, rejecting some and isolating others, and always combining them anew.

Walter H. Pater, Studies in the History of the Renaissance (London: Macmillan, 1873), p. 43.

i Pater's Writing Career: his intentions and ideals

In the mid 1860s, as a new fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, Pater began to contribute to periodicals and journals of the day. His first three reviews were "Coleridge's Writings", "Winckelmann", and "Poems by William Morris", published in the Westminster Review in 1866, 1867 and 1868 respectively.¹ So ambitious were these early essays in their themes, that "Coleridge's Writings" was later recast into two separate pieces, while "Winckelmann" and "Poems by William Morris" became central to The Renaissance, Pater's first book. Published in 1873, this contains all Pater's essays from 1866 onwards, with the exception of one minor review.

The years from 1874 to 1880 were a period of release after what was evidently a time of concentrated activity. The work Pater produced bears signs of diversity and even of aimlessness. He wrote on English literature and on Greek culture. In "Romanticism" and "The School of Giorgione" he tinkered with his ideas in The Renaissance; both were published around the time of the revised second edition in 1877. In 1878 he embarked upon semi-autobiographical pieces with "The Child in the House". This period of diversity came to a halt in 1880, when there was a silence after "The Marbles of Aegina", published in April of that year. Two reviews, a revised version of "Coleridge", and an article for T.H. Ward's English Poets were all that appeared until Marius the

¹ Pater had produced some poetry in his adolescence, according to Thomas Wright who quotes from several poems. Most of these are now lost, and those extant are comparatively uninteresting. The only essay written before 1865 which we have is "Diaphaneité", written in 1864; Pater does not appear to have intended this for publication at all. In this opening description of Pater's writing career I follow Samuel Wright, A Bibliography of the Writings of Walter H. Pater. A list of Pater's works and their publication dates may be found in Appendix I.

Epicurean was published in 1885.²

After the publication of this, his second book, there was a steady flow of shorter "imaginary portraits" and articles on literature. The collection Imaginary Portraits appeared in 1887. Astonishingly, over a year before this, when Pater had written only two of the four "portraits" in this volume, a notice had appeared in the Athenaeum, saying "Mr. Walter Pater is at work upon a new romance of the past. This time the scene will be laid in the sixteenth century and in France; but the work will not be finished for some time."³ Confident in his powers of production, Pater began serial publication of this novel, Gaston de Latour, in Macmillan's Magazine in June 1888, before he had completed even half of it. However, in October 1888, this stopped abruptly. The review of Flaubert's "Life and Letters", and the connected essay "Style", were produced at this time, amid a plethora of minor reviews. In 1889 Pater produced Appreciations, a collection of his earlier essays on English literature, and prefaced by "Style".

This date seems to mark a turning point in Pater's career. As if he had reviewed much of what he had previously written, Pater embarked upon another period of diversity, but this time he took up themes he had

² Pater began reading in preparation for Marius in 1881. From April 26 to May 16 he borrowed Marcus Aurelius, De Rebus Suis, from Brasenose College Library; from May 12 to May 23, Charles Cruttwell's History of Roman Literature. Thereafter books about the Antonine period, Roman literature and art appear regularly in the list of books he borrowed.

³ The Athenaeum (No. 3050), 10 April 1886, p. 490, quoted by Samuel Wright, p. 105. The notice is attributed to William Sharp. As early as the summer of 1885 Pater reread Martin's Histoire de France, Vol. 8, dealing with the period 1521 to 1559; in the summer of 1886 he borrowed Vol. 9 (1559 to 1585). From November 1886 onwards books about French history, religion and literature of the period appear regularly in the list of books borrowed.

explored before: Greek culture, art criticism, literature.⁴ In 1891 the first essay of Plato and Platonism appeared in the Contemporary Review; the book of collected essays on Plato was published in 1893. An extensively revised third edition of Marius in 1892 explains Pater's loss of momentum, according to Edmund Chandler.⁵ The revision was largely caused by Pater's developed ideas on style, he says, which may paradoxically have caused an insecurity in his other themes and writings. The years from 1892 to his death show a return to shorter "imaginary portraits" and to historical periods he had explored at length before. While a sense of tiredness and falling off is evident in Pater's work after 1889, however, it should not be forgotten that Pater left many unfinished manuscripts at his death. As Germain d'Hangest says,

⁴ Helen Hawthorne Young expresses a similar sense of the pattern of Pater's writing career, in The Writings of Walter Pater: A Reflection of British Philosophical Opinion from 1860 to 1890 (Bryn Mawr College: Leicester Press, 1933), p. 9:

Pater's work falls into four rather well-defined groups. The first essays, from Diaphaneité (1864) to the second edition of Studies in the Renaissance (1877) mirror the two opposing tendencies which we notice in general philosophical opinion. The second group, from The Child in the House (1877) to Marius the Epicurean (1885) introduce ideas and points of view which are more fully worked out in Marius, Gaston de Latour, and the essays written between them (1885-1889). In the last essays, we find chiefly supplementary material.

⁵ Edmund Chandler demonstrates that the essay "Style" "was so important in his own eyes that it demanded the instant revision of Marius". He suggests:

one can feel that the 'introversion', as it were, implied by the essay, the dwellings on first principles and then the time spent revising a published work rather than commencing a new one, stands for a relative failure of his creative impulse, for little of his best work was accomplished after 1888.

Pater on Style: An examination of the essay on 'Style' and the textual history of 'Marius the Epicurean', Anglistica, Vol. XI (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1958), p. 79.

la carrière de Pater, il ne faut pas l'oublier, se brise en plein essor et, jusqu'à l'instant suprême, nul fléchissement n'y vient trahir la silencieuse approche du destin. Peut-être même n'a-t-il jamais eu dans la tête plus d'oeuvres à faire et, par une étrange ironie des choses, on dirait qu'en cette période ultime, plus qu'en aucune autre, il a rêvé l'avenir et l'a cru pour des années nombreuses à sa disposition.⁶

D'Hangest's impression of Pater's surge of creative energy at the end of his life, cut short by an untimely death, derives largely from his interpretation of a perplexing period: Pater's years in London. From August 1885 to the end of July 1893, Pater lived in London during the Oxford vacations. Recent critics are in agreement that a clearer sense of his work may emerge from understanding the reasons for this move and for Pater's return to Oxford.⁷ Ian Fletcher, for example, takes the view that Pater hoped to dispel his sense of isolation by entering London literary society, and that "London, in the end, proved perhaps as much a desert for Pater as Oxford: like the Desert Fathers he remained (however unwillingly) a hermit to the end."⁸ D'Hangest also discerns the causes of Pater's departure from London as being discouragement and an insistent feeling of isolation. But he considers that Pater therefore returned to Oxford joyfully:

ce fut avec une joie profonde qu'en 1893 Pater s'établit, toujours accompagné de ses soeurs, au n° 64 de St Giles's Street....

A quelques mois de sa fin, ses activités littéraires ne s'étaient d'ailleurs aucunement ralenties, et l'on peut croire qu'il avait vu dans son retour à Oxford la possibilité d'acquérir des loisirs nouveaux.⁹

⁶ Walter Pater: l'Homme et l'Oeuvre, Etudes Anglaises 7 (Paris: Didier, 1961), II, 235.

⁷ See, for example, Lawrence Evans, "Walter Pater", in Victorian Prose: A Guide to Research, ed. D.J. DeLaura (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1973), p. 330.

⁸ op. cit., p. 9.

⁹ op. cit., II, 233, 234.

However, a study of Pater's correspondence suggests, on the contrary, a career beset by uncertainty and an increasing failure to bring projects to fruition. Admittedly, few letters survive; but these do help in certain directions. Pater occasionally comments on particular essays and stories: these local instances are trustworthy. The dates at which he makes certain plans help to ascertain when he changed direction in his work. His reactions to other writers' books often reveal his own ideas about the nature and problems of creative writing. The letters also show that Pater's aspirations often precede a surprisingly different result in the form of a consequent essay or story.

In 1878 Pater published "The Child in the House"; in 1893 he returned to Oxford. In the interim period he published three books, two of fiction and one critical work on English literature; attempted a second novel; and spent several years in London. The letters of this period are strikingly poignant, for Pater is continually planning new books, new series of essays, most of which did not materialise. It seems utterly inaccurate to say, as A.C. Benson does, that "he never wasted time in experimental researches; he knew his own mind; he knew exactly what interested him, and the limitations of his taste"; Symons, also, maintains that "The fact is that he was to a high degree highly self-centred, and that during his thirty years of literary labour he never faltered nor did he ever swerve from his own path."¹⁰ In fact, as Lawrence Evans comments,

These projects, the uncollected second series of imaginary portraits, and the various later works outlined or partly completed among the Harvard manuscripts suggest an experimental, tentative, and uncertain

¹⁰ A.C. Benson, Walter Pater (London: Macmillan, 1906), p. 203; Arthur Symons, A Study of Walter Pater (London: Charles Sawyer, 1932), p. 45.

quality in Pater's literary career that has not been generally acknowledged.¹¹

A study of the letters reveals another misconception common among critics. This is that The Renaissance is a youthful production, overstating a bold hedonism; that Pater retracts in Marius, and offers a compromise over what he means by "Epicureanism"; after which he comes increasingly to distrust what he said in The Renaissance, and moves to a more obviously religious position.¹² This derives from biographical details provided by Pater's contemporaries and read into his work. The letters and the works themselves, however, indicate that Pater was experimenting with different forms of expression, and that this occupied him far more than we have hitherto been led to believe.

Although Pater's correspondence is characteristically evasive and formal, by 1881 he had sufficient confidence in his abilities and his correspondents to talk about his plans for writing and to discuss his past work. In a letter to Henry James Nicoll on 28 November 1881, he selects as his notable essays, apart from The Renaissance, "Coleridge's Writings", "William Wordsworth", "A Fragment on 'Measure for Measure'", and "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone".¹³ All these are literary topics -- the last being primarily a study of the poetic nature of the myth -- and it is significant that Pater omits to mention the more scholarly essays on the Greeks such as "The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture", which was published in 1880. His omission of "The Child in the House" may indicate that he was reserving its fame: on 17 April 1878 he had told George Grove that he intended a series:

¹¹ Letters of Walter Pater (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) p. xxxi.

¹² See, for example, Benson, and more recently, John Pick, "Divergent Disciples of Walter Pater", Thought, XXIII (March 1948), 114-128.

¹³ LWP No. 66. All the letters quoted hereafter are from this edition, and references to their numbering will be included in the text.

It is not, as you may perhaps fancy, the first part of a work of fiction, but is meant to be complete in itself; though the first of a series, as I hope, with some real kind of sequence in them, and which I should be glad to send to you. I call the M.S. a portrait, and mean readers, as they might do on seeing a portrait, to begin speculating--what came of him? ¹⁴

On 4 November 1882 he divulges other plans to William Sharp:

You encourage me to do what I have sometimes thought of doing, when I have got on a little further with the work I have actually on hand--viz. to complete the various series of which the papers I have printed in the Fortnightly are parts. (LWP No. 69)

Pater was deeply immersed in Marius at this time, and was about to make his first visit to Rome for the purpose of research. Lawrence Evans surmises that the essays would have made up three series: on Greek art and mythology, on English literature, and a set of "imaginary portraits", the last presumably still intended as the project of letter 47.

By 22 July 1883 Pater's plans have changed somewhat. He writes to Vernon Lee:

I have hopes of completing one half of my present chief work--an Imaginary Portrait of a peculiar type of mind in the time of Marcus Aurelius-- by the end of this vacation, and meant to have asked you to look at some of the MS. perhaps. I am wishing to get the whole completed, as I have visions of many smaller pieces of work the composition of which would be actually pleasanter to me. However, I regard this present matter as a sort of duty. (LWP No. 78)

While these "visions" probably include the completion of the series mentioned in letter 69, it is likely that Pater was already contemplating what did materialise: the four imaginary portraits which appeared in 1885, 1886 and 1887, so swiftly and consistently after the publication of Marius, together with "Sir Thomas Browne". A further indication that Pater is planning the stories in Imaginary Portraits comes on 4 June 1884, again to Vernon Lee. He is discussing her book Euphorion which had just been published and which is dedicated to Pater. He selects for special

¹⁴ LWP No. 47. In A Study of Walter Pater Arthur Symonds says that "The Child in the House was really meant to be the first chapter of a romance which was to show 'the poetry of modern life'." (p. 105).

comment her essay on "Portrait Art":

It is not easy to do what you have done in the essay on 'Portrait Art', for instance--to make, viz. intellectual theorems seem like the life's essence of the concrete, sensuous objects, from which they have been abstracted. I always welcome this evidence of intellectual structure in a poetic or imaginative piece of criticism, as I think it a very rare thing, and it is also an effect I have myself endeavoured after, and so come to know its difficulties. . . . I find in Euphorion, not merely historic learning dominated by ideas, which is certainly a good thing; but ideas gathering themselves a visible presence out of historic fact, which to me, at least, is a far more interesting thing. (LWP No. 80)

The title of Vernon Lee's essay is significant when coupled with what Pater defines as her achievement: ideas based on historical fact yet rendered "visually" may be said to be a fundamental characteristic of what Pater chose to call "Portraits". At the time of writing this letter Pater was still working on Marius, and the problems he had encountered in writing it were of a different nature.¹⁵ He wrote to William Sharp on 1 March 1885, just before it was published:

I did mean it to be more anti-Epicurean than it has struck you as being. In one way I am glad that you have mistaken me a little on this point, as I had some fears that I might seem to be pleading for a formal thesis, or 'parti pris'. (LWP No. 86)

In the same letter Pater talks with some wistfulness about the "exclusively personal and solitary" nature of his work and thanks Sharp for his supportive recognition of his writing. In the light

¹⁵ See Louise Rosenblatt, "The Genesis of Pater's Marius the Epicurean", Comparative Literature XIV (1962), 242-60; especially pp. 256-7, where she argues that Pater rewrote the novel in the summer of 1883 after reading Lemaître's Sérénus because of the convenient ending of Sérénus: Given the character of his hero, Pater's method finally creates a problem. An impasse seems to be reached. . . . if [Marius] is also to be true to his implicit Victorian role--he cannot share their unquestioning faith. . . . Marius could continue indefinitely in this complex state of mind. From the point of view of narrative structure, this indecisive final position is unsatisfactory. . . . The martyrdom without faith becomes thus symbolic of the 'religious phase' possible for the modern mind.

of this uncharacteristic note, Pater's move to London in the summer of the same year, and his concentration on shorter works of fiction which would afford him more frequent recognition because of their more rapid publication, is partially a result of a desire for fellow-support in his work.

By 28 January 1886 the first portrait "A Prince of Court Painters" had already appeared in Macmillan's Magazine, and Pater was probably working on "Sebastian van Storck" which was to appear in March 1886.¹⁶ He was planning a long way ahead. He writes to Carl Wilhelm Ernst:

I may add that 'Marius' is designed to be the first of a kind of trilogy, or triplet, of works of a similar character; dealing with the same problems, under altered historical conditions. The period of the second of the series would be at the end of the 16th century, and the place France: of the third, the time, probably the end of the last century--and the scene, England.¹⁷

He repeats these plans in a letter to William Stanley Withers on 13 March 1886, and comments on the pressure of work: "my time is wholly occupied just now, in completing many unfinished pieces of literary work." (LWP No. 98) This must refer to "Sir Thomas Browne", "Denys l'Auxerrois" and possibly "Duke Carl of Rosenmold", as all other works between this letter and the appearance of Gaston in June 1888 are reviews. It would appear that although Pater had looked forward to the more pleasurable composition of the shorter pieces, they soon became less interesting than the prospect of Gaston de Latour. There

¹⁶ Pater borrowed Henri-Frédéric Amiel's Fragments d'un journal intime from the Taylor Institution Library as early as March 1885. According to Benson, p. 199, Mrs. Humphry Ward sent Pater her translation of Amiel's Journal as a Christmas gift that year. Echoes of this book appear in "Sebastian van Storck". See also LWP No. 95.

¹⁷ LWP No. 96. The third novel appears to have been started: among the unpublished manuscripts in the collection at the Houghton Library, Harvard, are five pages of notes towards it, plus two scraps, headed "Thistle".

is a sense of many ideas waiting to be expressed during this period, as Pater continually looks forward to the next project.

Imaginary Portraits was published on 24 May 1887. The day before, Pater writes to William Sharp and explains why he has not included "The Child in the House":

I pondered the inclusion among the other pieces of the 'Child in the House', but found it would need many alterations, which I felt disinclined to make just then. I hope it may be included in some future similar series.¹⁸

It is poignant to read all these ambitious plans which, with the benefit of hindsight, we know that Pater never achieved. This letter also emphasizes the important distinction between the textual validity of the volumes which Pater saw through the presses and of those published posthumously: Pater evidently felt that the composition, the overall identity, of his volumes was important.

The discussion of Vernon Lee's "Portrait Art" in letter 80 shows that as well as intending to continue the exploration of the themes in Marius, Pater was concerned with more technical challenges, of which Imaginary Portraits is the outcome. This aspect of writing emerges as a growing preoccupation during the year in which he must have been concentrating on Gaston, from May 1887 to June 1888. In that time only

¹⁸ LWP No. 107. German d'Hangest (I, 367, n. 7) argues that Marius supplanted Pater's projected series of which "The Child in the House" was the first chapter. This would explain Pater's alteration of his plans from what he told George Grove in 1878. However, Arthur Symonds says in his "Introduction" to The Renaissance (New York: n.d.), pp. xxi-xxii, that,

as far back as 1889 Pater was working towards a second volume of Imaginary Portraits of which Hippolytus Veiled was to have been one. He had another subject in Moroni's Portrait of a Tailor in the National Gallery, whom he was going to make a Burgomaster; and another was to have been a study of life in the time of the Albigenian persecution. There was also to be a modern study: could this have been Emerald Uthwart? No doubt Apollo in Picardy published in 1893, would have gone into the volume.

reviews and the third edition of The Renaissance appeared.¹⁹ On

8 January 1888 he writes to Arthur Symonds:

Rossetti, I believe, said that the value of every artistic product was in direct proportion to the amount of purely intellectual thought that went to the initial conception of it; and it is just this intellectual conception which seems to me to be so conspicuously wanting in what, in some ways, is the most characteristic verse of our time, especially that of our secondary poets. In your own pieces, particularly in your MS. 'A Revenge', I find Rossetti's requirement fulfilled, and should anticipate great things from one who has the talent of conceiving his motive with so much firmness and tangibility--with that close logic, if I may say so, which is an element in every genuinely imaginative process. It is clear to me that you aim at this, and it is what gives your verses, to my mind, great interest.
(LWP No. 121)

Lawrence Evans's footnote to this letter identifies the dictum to which Pater is referring as "Conception, my boy, FUNDAMENTAL BRAINWORK, that is what makes the difference in all art." Pater is stressing, as he did to Vernon Lee, the intellectual basis he works from in all his imaginative writing. His emphasis on "conception" shows a care for the writer's intention: writing is for Pater a clothing of intention in form.²⁰ In the same letter, a comment he makes on contemporary literature has great relevance for his own work:

I think the present age an unfavourable one to poets, at least in England. The young poet comes into a generation which has produced a large amount of first-rate poetry, and an enormous amount of good secondary poetry. You know I give a high place to the literature of prose as a fine art, and therefore hope you won't think me brutal in saying that the admirable qualities of your verse are those also of imaginative prose; as I think is the case also with much of Browning's finest verse.

¹⁹ The third edition of The Renaissance was itself revised: see Alan W. Bellringer, "The 'Conclusion' to The Renaissance: Pater's Original Meaning", Prose Studies 1800-1900, I, No. 1 (1977), 45-54.

²⁰ This phrase from Rossetti is quoted again by Pater in Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures (London: Macmillan, 1893), p. 106: "'Conception', observed an intensely personal, deeply stirred, poet and artist of our own generation: 'Conception, fundamental brainwork, --that is what makes the difference, in all art'."

The essays in Appreciations corroborate this suggestion that prose is the modern literary form: here, Pater implies that is so partly because there is so much poetry that a poet cannot write anything new, that the form is exhausted. Pater's work at this time was almost exclusively literary; he saw himself as one of the creative writers facing this problem.

Letter 133 to William Sharp is given the extremely tentative dating of June 1888;²¹ if we accept Lawrence Evans's reasons for this date, what Pater is quoted as saying is relevant:

. . . The heir who carefully sets himself to exploit his heritage, to till every barren land, to afforest every waste place, has already expended not the least of his treasures. A more austere judgement, a taste more serene because more severe, would not hasten to enforce from an irresponsible inheritance all that it could possibly be made to surrender: rather, this wiser heir would gladly move patiently through his domain, content if he has his due measure of delight in this grove or on that sunlit slope, content even though there are remoter slopes and still inward groves which he shall never explore, never more than discern, possibly that he shall not even view at all--the not unenviable ignorance of true wisdom.

A writer's heritage, the literary influences he is heir to, is given a concrete presence. It is a landscape: the "barren land" and "waste place" are the areas which have not been treated by past writers because they are not fruitful, "this grove or . . . that sunlit slope" are the ones that have. It is therefore necessary for the "heir" to come to terms with his heritage rather than evade it, if he is to conserve his creative energy. This demands a self-imposed austerity. It is a harsh demand, for Pater depicts "remoter slopes and still inward groves" which by implication are unavailable for any writer

²¹ This letter must be treated with caution, as it is only quoted from an unsigned review of Greek Studies in the Realm of 25 January 1895, and as Lawrence Evans says, "the dating in 1888 must be taken as very qualified".

of Pater's time.

October 1888 must have been a turbulent time for Pater and his writing. The instalment of Gaston which appeared that month was the last he published except for "Giordano Bruno Paris 1586".²² In August 1888 he had reviewed Flaubert's "Life and Letters", which led to "Style", published in December of that year. He explains to Arthur Symons on 29 October, "It will give me great pleasure to read the remaining proofs, if you don't mind my lengthiness about it --a lengthiness which I must now ask you to pardon with regard to the present instalment, my hands being somewhat burdened with work just now."²³ By 29 December he has moved on, however, to "Shakespeare's English Kings", which he tells Symons he is just completing: "I too am just completing a brief Shakespeare study--The English Kings:--am also at work on a new Portrait--Hippolytus Veiled." (LWP No. 142) Significantly he calls "Hippolytus Veiled" "a new Portrait". His commitment is still to literary topics. He is working on Appreciations and more short imaginary portraits.

The next period of Pater's working life which is illuminated by his letters begins in July 1890, when Appreciations was just published. He tells Louise Chandler Moulton on 22 July that he has "been a good deal engaged lately, and also overpowered with work promised, which I should like to finish before I go abroad shortly." (LWP No. 184)

²²"Giordano Bruno Paris 1586" was published in the Fortnightly Review on 1 August 1889, pp. 234-44, and was not connected with Gaston de Latour in its title.

²³ Lawrence Evans interprets this as referring to "Style" and Gaston. However, it seems likely that Pater had reached an impasse with Gaston, for the last instalment appeared in October 1888, and by 29 October Pater should either have completed the following chapter or taken a rest from it.

This must refer to a review of Edmund Gosse's "On Viol and Flute" which appeared in the Guardian in October 1890, "Art Notes in North Italy" and "Prosper Mérimée". Nothing further appeared until November 1891. Pater's projected trip abroad was cancelled: according to Michael Field, Pater was intending to finish Gaston in August 1890 instead.²⁴ This was evidently unsuccessful, for in a letter to Arthur Symons on 18 October 1890 he does not refer to Gaston at all:

I never got to Italy after all, this summer: instead, finished a paper of Art-Notes in North Italy, by way of prologue to an Imaginary Portrait with Brescia for background. (LWP No. 189)

Although Pater may still have hoped to finish Gaston, he was turning to other, shorter portraits. It is interesting that he regards a theoretical essay as a "prologue" to an imaginary portrait in the same setting.

At this period Pater's work was reaching an impasse. On 31 December 1890 he complains to Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff that he is working hard on lectures for undergraduates (LWP No. 193). This must refer to the lectures on Plato. He tells Arthur Symons on 27 January 1891 that the lectures and his own literary work are making him "overburdened" (LWP No. 194). It suggests that he was still struggling with Gaston, for the only work to appear from him before June 1892 was a review of Oscar Wilde's Picture of Dorian Gray and three of the Plato essays. The planned portrait with Brescia for background never materialised.²⁵

However, on 22 January 1892 Pater's hopes were still alive. He writes to William Canton of his Plato essays:

²⁴ Quoted in LWP No. 188, n. 3.

²⁵ Among the unpublished manuscripts at Harvard are twenty-one pages headed "Gaudioso, the second". This fragment is undoubtedly the projected portrait.

These contributions to the 'Contemporary' are parts of a book on Plato and Platonism I hope to get finished by the end of the year; having some other works near completion, viz. a second series of Imaginary Portraits, and Gaston de Latour, a sort of Marius in France, in the 16th Century. Parts of this were published in Macmillan's Magazine some years ago. (LWP No. 212)

He has, however, given up the plan of a trilogy.²⁶ The imaginary portraits being planned may well include "Emerald Uthwart" by this date, and the second series could have included "The Child in the House" and "Hippolytus Veiled". "Emerald Uthwart" and "Apollo in Picardy" are the last portraits that Pater produced. In a letter to William Canton on 23 October 1892, we hear of a tentative commitment to write a paper on St Hugh of Avalon, but time prevents Pater from doing this, and by 18 October 1893 his plans have changed considerably. Pater had moved back to Oxford permanently in July 1893. He writes to William Canton:

I found your letter on my return from the continent,--from France, where I have been studying some fine old churches, of which my mind is rather full just now. I have given up my house in Kensington, and my permanent address is as above.

I am afraid my promise about St Hugh was a rash one. Pray forgive me. I hope, however, to send you something acceptable for 'Good Words' by and bye. I am just finishing a paper on a Greek Art subject which I should like to find a place in the 'Contemporary' for December. (LWP No. 246)

The outcome of Pater's trip to France was, of course, the two essays on the cathedrals at Amiens and Vézelay, which appeared in January and May of 1894 respectively. His nearly-finished Greek subject is "The Age of Athletic Prizemen: A Chapter in Greek Art" which appeared in November 1893. Possibly "Apollo in Picardy" had been finished before he went to France. Pater no longer mentions his more ambitious literary projects, and seems, indeed, to have relinquished them. From this time onwards he concentrates on his Greek essays and on architectural studies.

²⁶ Lawrence Evans gives the last definite date for work being continued on Gaston as 14 December 1891, but here Pater is still optimistic.

On 7 November 1893 he writes to William Canton, "alas! I have nothing in book form nearly ready for publication at present". (LWP No. 247) In less than two years, and only shortly after the appearance of "Apollo in Picardy", he has abandoned the second series of imaginary portraits and Gaston, both of which he had told Canton in letter 212 were near to completion.

The only series which Pater later contemplates is "Some Great Churches of France", a return to the period he favours in his early essays on art and culture. He tells James Thomas Knowles on 22 January 1894 that this is "a series, to be ready at intervals", (LWP No. 255) but he seems so discouraged in his own abilities that he tells Knowles not to indicate that there is a general title. In the event, his death prevented the completion of this particular series: among the manuscripts he left was the beginning of a third essay, entitled "Notre-Dame de Troyes".

ii Some Features of Pater's Writing: repetition and quotation

One of the first features of Pater's work that the student remarks in reading through his oeuvre is that phrases recur. Pater uses writing from his previous works in later works. His interest in the period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in France is a particularly striking example. "Aucassin and Nicolette", "Denys l'Auxerrois", "Apollo in Picardy", "Notre-Dame d'Amiens" and "Vézelay" are all set in and are about this period. The dates of composition span his career. "Aucassin and Nicolette" stated Pater's basic ideas about the period:

For us the Renaissance is the name of a many-sided but yet united movement, in which the love of the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, the desire for a more liberal and comely way of conceiving life, make themselves felt, prompting those who experience this desire to seek first one and then another means of intellectual or imaginative enjoyment, and directing them not

merely to the discovery of old and forgotten sources of this enjoyment, but to divine new sources of it, new experiences, new subjects of poetry, new forms of art. Of this feeling there was a great outbreak in the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the following century. Here and there, under rare and happy conditions, in Pointed architecture, in the doctrines of romantic love, in the poetry of Provence, the rude strength of the middle age turns to sweetness; and the taste for sweetness generated there becomes the seed of the classical revival in it, prompting it constantly to seek after the springs of perfect sweetness in the Hellenic world. And coming after a long period in which this instinct had been crushed, that true 'dark age', in which so many sources of intellectual and imaginative enjoyment had actually disappeared, this outbreak is rightly called a Renaissance, a revival.²⁷

Fourteen years later, in "Denys l'Auxerrois", Pater combines his fascination in Heine's "Gods in Exile" with his work on the Dionysiac myth in "A Study of Dionysus", and places the return of Dionysus in France.²⁸ The "sweetness" described in "Aucassin and Nicolette" reappears:

He took his place among the workmen, a conventual novice; a novice also as to whatever concerns any actual handicraft. He could but compound sweet incense for the sanctuary. And yet, again by merely visible presence, he made himself felt in all the varied exercise around him of those arts which address themselves first of all to sight. He defined unconsciously a manner, alike of feeling and expression, to those skilful hands at work day by day with the chisel, the pencil, or the needle, in many an enduring form of exquisite fancy . . . It was as if the gay old

²⁷ Studies in the History of the Renaissance (London: Macmillan, 1873), pp. 2-3. Subsequent page references to this, the first edition, will be included in the text, identified by SHR. In later editions Pater changed the title from "Aucassin and Nicolette" to "Two Early French Stories", and the chapter was considerably longer, as it discussed Li Amitiez de Ami et Amile as well as Aucassin and Nicolette.

²⁸ Heinrich Heine's Gods in Exile was written in 1853 and published in the Revue des Deux Mondes for that year. It may be found in The Prose Writings of Heinrich Heine, ed. Havelock Ellis (London: Walter Scott, n.d.), pp. 268-89. The earliest critical article on this influence is J.S. Harrison, "Pater, Heine, and the Old Gods of Greece", Publications of the Modern Language Association, XXXIX (1924), 655-86, and since then it has been the topic of much criticism.

pagan world had been blessed in some way.²⁹

Here, Denys's occupation of compounding "sweet incense" is symbolic of his influence on the monks' creations. In "Denys" the sweetness infused into the strength of the Middle Ages by classicism is balanced by the softening of the pagan abandon and destructiveness by the medieval world. This reciprocal influence reappears in the essays written in the 1890s. During the 1880s Pater concentrates on sixteenth-century France; from 1891 onwards he turns to Greek sculpture and to Plato. These reawaken his interest in the "Gods in Exile" theme and hence in France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In "Notre-Dame d'Amiens" and "Vézelay" these interests are channelled into a study of architecture. The Dionysiac abandon is connected with the lively spirit of the commune which prompted the building of the cathedral at Amiens; the Apollonian constraint of the building in "Apollo in Picardy" is detected in the architecture of Vézelay. The "Preface" to The Renaissance, written in the same year as "Aucassin and Nicolette", is echoed in "Notre-Dame d'Amiens". In the former Pater says:

The objects with which aesthetic criticism deals, music, poetry, artistic and accomplished forms of human life, are indeed receptacles of so many powers or forces; they possess, like natural elements, so many virtues or qualities. What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me? (SHR, p. viii)

In the latter, the climax of his essay is the statement echoing the very beginning of his first published book:

We are reminded that after all we must of necessity look on the great churches of the Middle Age with other eyes than those who

²⁹ Imaginary Portraits (London: Macmillan, 1887), pp. 79-80. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by IP.

built or first worshipped in them; that there is something verily worth having, and a just equivalent for something else lost, in the mere effect of time, and that the salt of all aesthetic study is in the question,--What, precisely what, is this to me? ³⁰

This instance of self-quotation indicates the uninterrupted, yet modified, consistency of Pater's thought throughout his career.

Excluding "Denys l'Auxerrois", the dates of composition are from the very beginning and the very end of the period when he was writing.

In fact, if we study the dates of repetition and reworking, the time at which Pater began to return to previous concerns in this way and to rework already expressed ideas was in 1887, when he had published Imaginary Portraits. His next book was Appreciations, which significantly gathers together many of his earlier essays. "Denys l'Auxerrois", like the other portraits in Imaginary Portraits, represents a culmination of expression for Pater, embodying much of what he had said before in a new form.

Other examples of Pater's self-quotation confirm this. Pater would continue to work at a central idea until it reached a suitable form. "Poems by William Morris" reappears as the "Conclusion" to The Renaissance and as "Aesthetic Poetry". Likewise, the essays on Coleridge and Wordsworth underwent several transformations.³¹ Pater may be called extremely economical in his willingness to adopt previously published statements if they were suitable for his work in progress. More seriously, however, he is revealed as being self-conscious about his work to the point of

³⁰ Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 113. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by MS.

³¹ See Samuel Wright for details of the textual histories of "Poems by William Morris", "Coleridge's Writings", and "On Wordsworth". In Walter Pater, p. 106, Gerald Monsman comments, "The essays on Coleridge and Wordsworth are positively protean".

obsession. His compulsive revisions after publication also attest to this.³² The suitable form was determined by matters as small as punctuation and as large as the choice between essay and fiction. "Diaphaneité", "Winckelmann" and "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" are all verbally and thematically related. Pater's ideas move from a musing, abstract theorising, in "Diaphaneité", through the biographical narrative of "Winckelmann" to the more ambitious fiction of "Duke Carl of Rosenmold". "A Study of Dionysus" and "Denys l'Auxerrois" are connected in a similar way: here, the ideas are transformed directly from exegesis into fictional exploration. The same development is evident in the reworking of ideas from "Joachim du Bellay" in Gaston de Latour.

In many cases Pater's reviews introduce ideas and even phrases which he later adopts in his own writing. The review "Children in Italian and English Design" affords a phrase which is incorporated in both "Romanticism" and the "Postscript" to Appreciations.³³ "Amiel's Journal: The Journal Intime of Henri-Frédéric Amiel" contributes greatly to "Sebastian van Storck", which was published in the same month: the characterization of Sebastian resembles Amiel's personality, and phrases from the review and the book being reviewed are echoed in the portrait. "The Life and Letters of Flaubert" prompted many of the statements in "Style".³⁴

³² See Bellringer and Chandler.

³³ The phrase is "that House Beautiful which the genuine and humanistic workmen of all ages, all those artists who have really felt and understood their work, are always building together for the human spirit". ("Children in Italian and English Design", The Academy, Vol. III, No. 52, 15 July 1872, 267-8).

³⁴ See S.C. Chew, "Pater's Quotations", The Nation (October 1914), for an examination of Pater's use of Flaubert's correspondence in "Style".

This compulsive repetition indicates an inability to find a true beginning from which to start to write. Edward Said has discussed at length the implications of "beginnings".³⁵ His definition of a beginning runs: "The beginning . . . is the first step in the intentional production of meaning" (p. 5). The writer, whose very career assumes the character of an "intentional production of meaning" in the succession of works he produces, is driven to regard his writing as continual revision: "Once he is embarked upon a career, the writer's production vacillates questioningly between sketch and final draft, which may or may not be adequate, finally, for inclusion in the text" (p. 251). This is a part of the "process of meaning fulfilment" (p. 251). But before he has embarked upon a career, his initial beginning, his intention, must signify a departure from what has gone before:

Beginnings inaugurate a deliberately other production of meaning--a gentile (as opposed to a sacred) one. It is 'other' because, in writing, this gentile production claims a status alongside other works: it is another work, rather than one in a line of descent from X or Y. (p. 13)

In an article by Z.E. Green, the unsatisfactory nature of Pater's beginnings is examined.³⁶ Green condemns Pater for being too fond of classifying and differentiating:

He cannot paint distinctions by innuendo or by example--there must be preliminary paragraphs of definition. He cannot be content to raise the curtain and show us a man standing before a backdrop which reveals the time and the influences from which the man has risen. The audience must see the backdrop put into place, must suffer an explanation of every depiction upon it, before the man is brought upon the stage. And, even at this point, there must be an elaborate introduction and some formal niceties before the man begins to speak.

³⁵ Beginnings: Intention and Method (New York: Basic Books, 1975). Subsequent page references are included in the text.

³⁶ "Walter Pater's Unhappy Beginnings", The English Journal, XXIV (1935), 421-2.

It is not wholly that Pater is a "precisionist", as Green contends. His reported methods of composition do reveal his painstakingness.³⁷ But in fact Pater never solved for himself the question of where to locate the beginning of anything. His opening chapter of Plato and Platonism begins with the sentence: "With the world of intellectual production, as with that of organic generation, nature makes no sudden starts. Natura nihil facit per saltum; and in the history of philosophy there are no absolute beginnings".³⁸ This would be an ironic and discouraging commencement to any book. Pater proceeds to trace philosophy back to poetry, and that in turn to "the natural though but half-developed instincts of the human mind itself" (p. 1). He explains that no idea is ever truly new, although it may appear to be so to a particular age. Any apparently new idea turns out to be "created" from

³⁷ In Critical Kit-Kats (London: Heinemann, 1896), pp. 263-4, Edmund Gosse describes how Pater, while reading, would have beside him small squares of paper, "jotting down on each very roughly, anything in his author which struck his fancy, either giving an entire quotation, or indicating a reference, or noting a disposition". These he placed about him, like the pieces of a puzzle, . . . he would then begin the labour of actual composition, and so conscious was he of the modifications and additions which would supervene that he always wrote on ruled paper, leaving each alternate line blank. . . . In the first draft the phrase would be a bald one; in the blank alternate line he would at leisure insert fresh descriptive or parenthetical clauses, other adjectives, more exquisitely related adverbs, until the space was filled. It might then be supposed that the MS. was complete. Far from it! Cancelling sheet by sheet, Pater then began to copy out the whole--as before, on alternate lines of copy-book pages; this revise was treated in the same way--corrected, enlarged, interleaved, as it were, with minuter shades of feeling and more elaborate apparatus of parenthesis.

³⁸ Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures (London: Macmillan, 1893), p. 1. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by PP. Although this book was published late in Pater's life, Pater was lecturing on Plato for many years; the statements quoted here therefore have reference to his ideas during much of his writing career. There are, however, certain passages in Plato and Platonism which represent a development from earlier writings.

the fossilized remains of older thought: "They are everywhere in it, not as the stray carved corner of some older edifice, to be found here or there amid the new, but rather like minute relics of earlier organic life in the very stone he builds with" (p. 2). This unavoidable temporal continuum is reflected in the equal impossibility of marshalling one's ideas together to embark upon a beginning. Plato's originality consists of his "encyclopaedic" view of knowledge: he is successfully "eclectic". To create a beginning becomes to impose cohesion through form:

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that in Plato, in spite of his wonderful savour of literary freshness, there is nothing absolutely new: or rather, as in many other very original products of human genius, the seemingly new is old also, a palimpsest, a tapestry of which the actual threads have served before, or like the animal frame itself, every particle of which has already lived and died many times over. Nothing but the life-giving principle of cohesion is new; the new perspective, the resultant complexion, the expressiveness which familiar thoughts attain by novel juxtaposition. In other words, the form is new. But then, in the creation of philosophical literature, as in all other products of art, form, in the full signification of that word, is everything, and the mere matter is nothing. (pp. 3-4)

Cohesion is not innovatory either; it is juxtaposition, adjacency, an escape from sequential inheritance to reformulation, realignment, and change in perspective.³⁹

Closely allied with this is Pater's "historical method" of criticism in Plato and Platonism. He talks of cultural interconnectedness, as set forth by Hegel. The work of art is determined by its "environment" (here he connects Hegel's theories with Darwin's later ideas); the genius is "at once pliant and resistant" to it (p. 6). Just as Pater found difficulty in so much as locating a beginning, so he found himself influenced by and reacting to his own age and its heritage. In Plato

³⁹ I take my vocabulary here from Said, Chapter I.

and Platonism "the historic spirit impresses upon us the fact that some of its leading thoughts are partly derivative from earlier thinkers" (p. 6). The first earlier thinker whom Pater studies is Heraclitus, whose influence on Plato, significantly "was by way of antagonism or reaction" (p. 7). While historicism impresses upon us woefully the degree of determinism in any development of apparently "new" thought, it also allows for a fragmentary yet changing development through resistance and reaction, another means of redirection.

Pater does not only quote from himself: he also quotes extensively from other writers. In many of the essays, other writers are quoted to support his critical points as part of the accepted scholarly apparatus of the essay form. The Renaissance abounds in citations from Hegel, Goethe, Lavater, Quinet, Mme. de Stael, to name but five "authorities". In the essays of Appreciations and in essays such as "Winckelmann", "Leonardo da Vinci" and "Joachim du Bellay", Pater also quotes sparingly from books about his subject in order to add a sense of biography to his critical comments. In many of the minor reviews to be found in Essays from the 'Guardian', and in "M. Feuillet's La Morte", which was eventually included in Appreciations, Pater quotes extensively from the work under review.

These are all straightforward instances of how a writer will quote from another source. However, in Pater's extensive use of "source material" we encounter the first signs of appropriation. F. Staub has established how much background reading can be detected in Imaginary Portraits. This aspect of Pater's work has received a lot

of critical attention, especially with regard to Marius.⁴⁰ Pater adopts much of his source material without acknowledgement. Thomas Mann was accused of doing this in his Doktor Faustus. He was aware of the problems of so-called plagiarism, and while he was writing his novel wrote to Theodor W. Adorno about it. After noting his borrowings from Nietzsche, Tchaikovsky's biography, and Shakespeare, a technique which he calls "the principle of montage, which peculiarly and perhaps outrageously runs through this entire book without any attempt at concealment", Mann proceeds to explain why he has done it:

To plead Molière's 'Je prends mon bien où je le trouve' strikes me as an insufficient excuse for this conduct. It might be said that I have developed an inclination in old age to regard life as a cultural product, hence a set of mythic clichés which I prefer, in my calcified dignity, to 'independent' invention. But I know only too well that quite early in life I went in for a kind of higher copying: i.e., in describing Hanno Buddenbrook's [sic] typhoid fever the details of which I unabashedly lifted from an encyclopedia article and then 'versified', as it were. The chapter has become famous. But its merit consists only in a certain poeticization of mechanically appropriated material (and in the trick of indirectly communicating Hanno's death).

The case is more difficult--not to say more scandalous--when it is a matter of appropriating materials which are themselves already poetic--that is, when a real literary borrowing is involved, performed, with an air that what has been filched is just good enough to serve one's own pattern of ideas.⁴¹

Mann admits that he has borrowed certain parts of Adorno's essays on the philosophy of music. He explains that he cannot break the fictional illusion in Doktor Faustus by acknowledging his debt, but that his aim of writing a "musician-novel which occasionally even seems to aspire to become, along with other things, a novel of music", requires a scholarship

⁴⁰ F. Staub, Das imaginäre Porträt Walter Paters (Zurich: 1926). With reference to Marius, in Victorian Prose: A Guide to Research the general comment is made: "Scholarship has given considerable attention to backgrounds and sources" (p. 347).

⁴¹ The Letters of Thomas Mann 1889-1955 (London: Penguin, 1975), letter dated 30 December 1945.

which he lacks. "I trust", he concludes this apology, "that the borrowings will serve as an independent function within the pattern of the whole, will acquire a symbolic life of their own--while at the same time continuing to exist intact in their original places in works of criticism."

Mann recognized that this problem was not confined to his practices in Doktor Faustus.⁴² At the end of this letter he betrays that he intends his statements to be public, that they may be taken to be a declaration to posterity: "Let it be the groundwork for our conversation, as well as a record for posterity, if there should be a posterity." He has offered three excuses for appropriating other writers' material. In ascending order of sophistication they are that factual material may be poeticized (as in Hanno's death); that literary material may serve a different purpose in a new work of art, while maintaining its autonomy in its original, authorially intended position; and that the whole body of literature is a communal product, so that all previous literature is for the writer in the act of writing a fund of "mythic clichés". This last, which Mann here discards, ignores the independence of any author, disclaims his right of possession over anything he writes. Yet he states it as a possible excuse, and for Pater--and Mann--it is an important point. In Plato and Platonism Pater traces back some of Plato's central ideas to their original inception, and we find that the notion of authority has disappeared in the process:

The central and most intimate principles of his teaching challenge us to go back beyond them, not merely to his own immediate, somewhat enigmatic master--to Socrates, who survives chiefly in his pages--

⁴² Ironically, though, Mann angered and alienated Schoenberg when he published this novel, as Schoenberg felt that Mann had "stolen" his theory of twelve-tone music discussed in the novel.

but to various precedent schools of speculative thought, in Greece, in Ionia, in Italy; beyond these into that age of poetry, in which the first efforts of philosophic apprehension had hardly understood themselves; beyond that unconscious philosophy, again, to certain constitutional tendencies, persuasions, forecasts of the intellect itself, such as had given birth, it would seem, to thoughts akin to Plato's in the older civilisations of India and of Egypt, as they still exercise their authority over ourselves. (pp. 2-3)

The same tendencies led to Plato's thought and to Indian and Egyptian philosophies; so great is their power that they still have authority over men's thoughts in nineteenth-century England. But their "authority" is that of a religious origin rather than a secular beginning

Edward Said distinguishes between them, calling them respectively "an intransitive, 'pure' beginning and a transitive, problem- or project-directed beginning".⁴³ The latter is a product of the author's intention:

To identify a beginning--particularly that of a historical movement or a realm of thought--with an individual is of course an act of historical understanding. More than that, however, it is what may be called an intentional act--that is, an act in which designating individual X as founder of continuity Y (a movement, say) implies that X has value in having intended Y. Although there are other ways of identifying beginnings, this one avoids the passivity of 'origins' by substituting the intentional beginning act of an individual for the more purely circumstantial existence of 'conditions'.⁴⁴

Pater has stressed the "more purely circumstantial existence of 'conditions'" as the true origins of all thought. If no-one can create a beginning, and no-one therefore has authority, then Pater is free to create a beginning by means of previous writing. When he quotes without acknowledgement, he is bereaving the writers whom he quotes of their authority and identity. The artistic gift becomes, for Pater and for Mann, the knack of "eclecticism", of cohesion, and literature has become

⁴³ Said, p. 50.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 32.

a fund of communal "mythic clichés".

In Marius the Epicurean Pater uses, for example, the following works of literature written in the second century AD: Marcus Aurelius's Meditations and Letters to Marcus Cornelius Fronto, the anonymous poem Pervigilium Veneris, Fronto's discourse on The Nature of Morals, Eusebius's Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne, Lucian's Hermotinus, and The Golden Ass of Apuleius.⁴⁵ They are included as integral parts of his own text. He also quotes extensively from numerous nineteenth-century critical sources. Fittingly, he manages his "montage" perhaps best in the very opening chapter of Plato and Platonism, where he quotes from Darwin, Heraclitus, Hegel, Shakespeare, Bacon, Dante and the Bible, as well as from Plato. His writing is itself a palimpsest, a living testimony of his description of knowledge.

The assimilated principles of Heraclitus, Hegel and Darwin all prevent any true novelty, but allow for all things to pass so that they may be repeated in a new way. Pater sees everything changing:

Political constitutions, again, as we now see so clearly, are 'not made', cannot be made, but 'grow'. Races, laws, arts, have their origins and end, are themselves ripples only on the great river of organic life; and language is changing on our very lips. (p. 15)

Throughout the first chapter of Plato and Platonism there is an ambivalence about this. Pater's attitudes towards his own age and towards Plato's differ radically. His analysis of the lack of a true beginning in Plato's thought is determined by both his nineteenth-century perspective and his own needs. He must prove that even Plato is only "new" through his ability to cohere schools of thought. Yet from a truly historical analysis, he sees that thinkers did in fact step aside from

⁴⁵ For example, Eusebius is used in Chapter XXVI; Lucian in Chapter XX. Lucian is also quoted in the epigraph to the novel.

life and reflect, thus beginning to think:

Amid the irreflective actors in that rapidly moving show, so entirely immersed in it superficial as it is that they have no feeling of themselves, he becomes self-conscious. He reflects; and his reflexion has the characteristic melancholy of youth when it is forced suddenly to bethink itself, and for a moment feels already old, feels the temperature of the world about it sensibly colder. (p. 8)

Throughout Plato and Platonism the conditions of Plato's Greece and of nineteenth-century England sit uneasily together, straining Pater's analysis of Plato until he has to remark the difference. In "The Doctrine of Plato" he says,

We may contrast generally the mental world we actually live in, where classification, the reduction of all things to common types, has come so far, and where the particular, to a great extent, is known only as the member of a class, with that other world, on the other side of the generalising movement to which Plato and his master so largely contributed--a world we might describe as being under Homeric conditions, such as we picture to ourselves with regret, for which experience was intuition, and life a continuous surprise, and every object unique, where all knowledge was still of the concrete and the particular, face to face delightfully. (p. 141)

Pater and Plato are on different sides of that "generalising movement". Plato is in fact not aware of the "historic spirit", and therefore sees newness as a possibility for the writer or thinker.⁴⁶ Wherever we place the rift, and however we define it, Pater feels himself to be living in a time when nothing is new, because man has grown old and become self-conscious. Pater's debt to past literature is far greater than Plato's could be. His prose, for example, is imbued with cadences of the Bible,

⁴⁶ For example, in Plato and Platonism Pater says: Plato certainly is less aware than those who study these matters in the 'historic spirit' of the modern world that for the most part, like other more purely physical things, states 'are not made, but grow'. Yet his own work as a designer or architect of what shall be new is developed quite naturally out of the question how an already existing state, such as the actual Athens of the day, might secure its pre-eminence, or its very existence. (p. 216)

the psalms, Shakespeare, and other English writers. For a writer in Pater's time, it was not simply a matter of reconciling past authority with one's own intention, of juggling with different concepts of originality. The past is seen as a burden.

For all his polite reasoning in the letter quoted above, Mann also was aware of the past as an influence to be disarmed, subverted, destroyed. In a letter to his son, discussing his son's new book,

Der Vulkan, he comments on

the almost childlike naïveté with which the literary influences obtrude. In technical details and manipulations, your great uncle looms large. Toward the end, it seems to me, the old Magician comes out strongly; and what particularly struck me is the extreme distinctness with which Knut Hamsun speaks up a few times, although by rights he shouldn't exist at all, anymore, you know. For you are also an heir who has assumed the right, one might say, to lie down in a made bed. But after all, one must also know how to inherit, for in the final analysis what is culture but an inheriting? Not for nothing are the Bolsheviks always talking about the 'bourgeois heritage'. 47

'How to inherit': Mann suggests that inheritance is a prerequisite of being cultured, being a writer, but implies also that it must be done by a rejection. Talking of his own work, he later points out how mocking it can be. The important thing is that it mocks tradition:

This mockery is closely related to a parody, not cynical but affectionate, of tradition. Such may well be the attitude of a writer who in an age of endings and transitions finds himself at once playing the part of a straggler, consummating and completing the past, and the part of an innovator undermining and dissolving it. It is the role of the ironic conservative. 48

Pater is exactly this "ironic conservative". His way of undermining and dissolving the past is by not acknowledging his debts and by misquoting

47 Letters, 22 July 1939.

48 ibid., 28 August 1951.

his sources.⁴⁹

In the "Preface" to The Renaissance Pater outlines his critical procedure and calls himself an "aesthetic critic". This was the opening chapter of his first published book. The tone is self-confident and Pater strikes an unmistakably innovative note. Yet the very first sentence recalls to the reader's mind other critics whom Pater proceeds to modify or contradict: "Many attempts have been made by writers on art and poetry to define beauty", he says, but he denies the need to do so. Pater quotes Matthew Arnold without naming him, and, while allowing the "justice" of what Arnold says in "On the Function of Criticism at the Present Time", he modifies the statement:

'To see the object as in itself it really is', has been justly said to be the aim of all true criticism whatever; and in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly. (SHR, p. viii)

In this juxtaposition of the objective ideal and the subjective imperative, he also echoes Ruskin's very different comments.⁵⁰ Later he quotes "a recent critic of Sainte-Beuve", and William Blake, in support of his claims. While Pater was intent upon differing from his immediate predecessors, he

⁴⁹ Edward Said comments: quotation is a constant reminder that writing is a form of displacement. For although quotation can take many forms, in every one the quoted passage symbolizes other writing as encroachment, as a disturbing force moving potentially to take over what is presently being written. As a rhetorical device, quotation can serve to accommodate, to incorporate, to falsify (when wrongly or even rightly paraphrased), to accumulate, to defend, or to conquer--but always, even when in the form of a passing allusion, it is a reminder that other writing serves to displace present writing, to a greater or lesser extent, from its absolute, central, proper place. (p. 22)

⁵⁰ In "Of the Pathetic Fallacy", Modern Painters Vol. III, Part 4, 1856. Harold Bloom, in his introduction to Selected Writings of Walter Pater (New York: Signet, 1974), p. xvi, claims in fact that The Renaissance is primarily an answer to Ruskin.

regarded himself as part of a strong tradition stretching back to the eighteenth century.

Pater's use of foreign literature is also extensive. It is significant that during the early 1860s he translated a page from French or German every day, and that translations numbered among his manuscripts at his death.⁵¹ This habit is relevant to the subject of misquotation. The significance of misquotation has only recently been recognized by critics. In the obscenity trial of D H Lawrence's novel Lady Chatterley's Lover, for example, Graham Hough was challenged by the prosecution about Lawrence's misquotations from the Bible:

Next, Mr Griffith-Jones had caught Lawrence misquoting from the Bible. 'In a work of high literary merit', he said, 'if you were minded to quote from somebody you would expect the author to quote it accurately?'--'No, sir. From my knowledge of the habits of authors, it is the last thing I would expect, for them to quote accurately. They do it from memory and they always get it wrong.'⁵²

However, in comparing Arnold's and Pater's habits of misquotation, Christopher Ricks detects an important reason for Pater's inaccurate translation of foreign writers:

the problem for Pater was not there where it was for Flaubert; it was to combine an explicit announcement that the great writer found the one word that was absolutely proper, with an implicit

⁵¹ Pater told William Sharp in 1881 that before his twenty-fifth year he had written a good deal in verse, and had made many metrical translations from the Greek anthology, from Goethe, and from Alfred de Musset and other French poets. . . . 'I have great faith in scrupulous and sympathetic translations as a training in English composition. At one time I was in the habit of translating a page from some ancient or modern prose writer every day: Tacitus or Livy, Plato or Aristotle, Goethe or Lessing or Winckelmann, and once, month after month, Flaubert and Sainte-Beuve.' (William Sharp, Papers Critical and Reminiscent, London:1912, pp.203-4). Among the manuscripts at Harvard are thirty-eight sides (sixty-nine pages) of translations from Plato, which appear to have been written at several different periods, and forty-five sides (forty-nine pages) of translation from an unidentified French source or sources.

⁵² C.H. Rolph (ed.), The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v. Penguin Books Limited (London: Penguin, 1961), p. 53.

assurance that the life of a critic was worth anything only if it was worth at least no less than that of an artist, and that therefore it was absolutely proper for the critic to substitute his own uniqueness for the earlier and other creation.

The essay on 'Style' is therefore characterized by one of Pater's grandest unions of audacity and evasion, in the higher prudential assurance: it quotes not one single instance of that consummated style which it invokes; its only quotations are about, and not of, style; and the thing which its quoted authors--Montaigne, Schiller, Flaubert, and Maupassant--have in common is that in no case is Pater giving us, since they did not write in English, their 'one word for the one thing', their 'unique word, phrase, sentence'. 53

Pater's fondness for foreign writers in many of his theoretical essays must therefore be related to his freedom, in translation, to rewrite them in his own words: he thereby achieves both a rejection of previous writers and a greater status in his role as critic.

Pater's use of sources bears upon another aspect of his work. In his review of the Contes of Augustin Filon he says,

a fully detailed antiquarian knowledge, used with admirable tact and economy, is indeed serviceable in giving reality of effect to scene and character. In truth, M. Filon's very lively anti-quarianism carries with it a genuine air of personal memory. With him, as happens so rarely, an intimate knowledge of historic detail is the secret of life, of the impression of life; puts his own imagination on the wing; secures the imaginative co-operation of the reader. 54

All Pater's habits of quotation are ways of capturing "the imaginative co-operation of the reader": by subsuming the quoted, foundational work, by omitting the writer's name, by translating and therefore circumscribing the quoted text, by quoting so extensively that his comments paradoxically become irrefutable (for the extent of quotation conceals selection).

53 "Pater, Arnold and misquotation", Times Literary Supplement, 25 November 1977, pp. 1383-5. The earliest and most influential essay on the topic of misquotation is Matthew J.C. Hodgart, "Misquotation as Re-creation", Essays in Criticism Vol. 3, No. 1 (1953), 28-38.

54 "The 'Contes' of M. Augustin Filon", (16 July 1890), in Essays from 'The Guardian' (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 138. Subsequent page references to this volume will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by EG.

Pater's text has therefore become secure and impregnable. In a similar way, Pater wishes to give his ideas a firm outline--yet to make them receptive and generous. He praises Vernon Lee's ability to "make, viz. intellectual theorems seem like the life's essence of the concrete, sensuous objects, from which they have been abstracted" (LWP No. 80). In "The Doctrine of Plato: The Theory of Ideas" he rejects the "idea" as being the culminating expression of knowledge:

We cannot love or live upon genus and species, accident or substance, but, for our minds, as for our bodies, need an orchard or a garden, with fruit and roses. Take a seed from the garden. What interest it has for us all lies in our sense of potential differentiation to come: the leaves, leaf upon leaf, the flowers, a thousand new seeds in turn. It is so with animal seed; and with humanity, individually, or as a whole, its expansion into a detailed, ever-changing, parti-coloured history of particular facts and persons. Abstraction, the introduction of general ideas, seem to close it up again; to reduce flower and fruit, odour and savour, back again into the dry and worthless seed. (PP, p. 141)

Here, Pater wants to make the idea immediate by giving it an individuality. Yet in Plato and Platonism Pater also stresses that form is a means of cohesion. He therefore wishes to contain the possible discreteness of the idea within that same individual form, to encompass everything coherently. Lionel Trilling defines the idea:

Every sentient organism acts on the principle that pleasure is to be preferred to pain, but man is the sole creature who formulates or exemplifies this as an idea and causes it to lead to other ideas. His consciousness of self abstracts this principle of action from his behaviour and makes it the beginning of a process of intellection or a matter for tears and laughter. And this is but one of the innumerable assumptions or ideas that are the very stuff of literature. 55

To Trilling the idea is a matter of self-reflection, a formulation which contains because it expresses; it is form, in other words. Heraclitus,

⁵⁵ "The Meaning of a Literary Idea", in The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society (London: Secker and Warburg, 1951), pp. 280-300.

according to Pater, began to think through self-reflection. It was a good beginning at that time, in a chaotic world. However, Trilling sees that the greatest difficulty in the connection between literature and ideas is when ideas are "highly elaborated", or exist in "highly elaborated systems such as philosophy, or theology, or science". He locates the problem as being post-Romantic. Here again is that rift which Pater detects between Plato and himself. The firm outline of the idea when it becomes highly elaborated--in modern terms, ideology--is unacceptable in literature. Pater, then, is concerned with finding a form that will "make it new" through containment yet which will not constrict or reduce through system to nothingness.

In "Style" Pater explains his conviction that "imaginative prose" is the "art of the modern world":

Literary art, that is, like all art which is in any way imitative or reproductive of fact--form, or colour, or incident--is the representation of such fact as connected with soul, of a specific personality, in its preferences, its volition and power.

Such is the matter of imaginative or artistic literature--this transcript, not of mere fact, but of fact in its infinite variety, as modified by human preference in all its infinitely varied forms. It will be good literary art not because it is brilliant or sober, or rich, or impulsive, or severe, but just in proportion as its representation of that sense, that soul-fact, is true, verse being only one department of such literature, and imaginative prose, it may be thought, being the special and opportune art of the modern world. That imaginative prose should be the special and opportune art of the modern world results from two important facts about the latter: first, the chaotic variety and complexity of its interests, making the intellectual issue, the really master currents of the present time incalculable--a condition of mind little susceptible of the restraint proper to verse form, so that the most characteristic verse of the nineteenth century has been lawless verse; and secondly, an all-pervading naturalism, a curiosity about everything whatever as it really is, involving a certain humility of attitude, cognate to what must, after all, be the less ambitious form of literature. 56

⁵⁶ Appreciations: With an Essay on Style (London: Macmillan, 1889), pp. 6-7. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by App.

The modern world cannot respond to constraint. An artistic expression of modern life must be unified in a way that allows for "curiosity". The form of a work of art must be impermeable, capturing the reader's assent, yet receptive of, and generous with, ideas. Likewise the ideas themselves must be transformed into images.

The publishing dates of Pater's essays suggest a writing career which was characterized by two periods of intense activity and purpose, when Pater produced first The Renaissance and secondly Marius the Epicurean and Imaginary Portraits. Both periods were followed by times of diversity and aimlessness in his writing. This exploratory range of Pater's choice of topics is reflected in the letters which have survived, but sadly, they betray also that many of his plans never reached fruition. The pattern of fulfilment and then inability to produce becomes clearer when we examine some of the outstanding features of Pater's oeuvre. His habits of revision and rewriting central concerns are present throughout his career, but reach a turning point after he published Imaginary Portraits. Paradoxically, although he wrote upon an impressive array of topics, he was paralysed by the problems of where and how to begin. Returning to his own work was preferable to embarking on a topic where he had to locate a beginning and where the burden of a literary heritage had to be accepted and worked with. Many of Pater's essays are about the beginnings of culture. Many more are about innovators. When Pater presented his own ideas, they withstood frequent reworkings, for he felt that form was the only true novelty. Pater's ideas on form reflect his ideas on his own age: only the difficult combination of diversity and restraint in a work of art would express the modern age. This combination of opposites has been defined by other critics as stasis and flux, Apollonian and Dionysiac, centripetal and centrifugal. It runs through

the whole of Pater's work. In the chapters that follow, I study the technical choices that Pater made on the basis of this tense combination, in order to reconcile what I call diversity and restraint.

CHAPTER II

The Renaissance: the uses of type and biography

Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here.

Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, Vol V of The Works (London: Chapman and Hall, 1899), Lecture 1, p. 3.

i "Diaphaneitè"

The earliest prose specimen of Pater's work that exists is "Diaphaneitè". Pater initialled the manuscript of this essay "W.H.P. July 1864".¹ It is a curious piece - the writer's tone and his attitude towards the reader are obscure, and we feel that we are missing some introductory comments which would clarify its context. It was, of course, collected for the posthumous volume Miscellaneous Studies by Charles Shadwell, Pater's literary executor. "It is with some hesitation", Shadwell says in his introduction, "that the paper on Diaphaneitè, the last in this volume, has been added, as the only specimen known to be preserved of those early essays of Mr Pater's, by which his literary gifts were first made known to the small circle of his Oxford friends".² We must accept it, then, as an example of early work, laid aside by Pater and never revised to his demanding standards for publication.

Pater presents Diaphaneitè, his "ideal" character, in two lights: as a member of society and as a perfect individual. As a member of society, Diaphaneitè is too pure and transparent to be recognized:

The world has no sense fine enough for those evanescent shades, which fill up the blanks between contrasted types of character-- delicate provision in the organisation of the moral world for the transmission to every part of it of the life quickened at single points! For this nature there is no place ready in its affections. This colourless, unclassified purity of life it can neither use for its service, nor contemplate as an ideal. (p. 252)

But although it is "a paradox in the world, denying the first conditions of man's ordinary existence" (p. 254), it presages the future. It is a

¹ The manuscript of "Diaphaneitè" is at the King's School, Canterbury.

² Miscellaneous Studies, pp. v-vi. All quotations from "Diaphaneitè" are from this edition. "Diaphaneitè" was read by Pater to the Oxford literary society "Old Mortality" in 1864.

"revolutionist" (P. 256), according to Pater, because it treasures the pure, intellectual life that it epitomizes. It has affinities with Hellenism, and its Hellenistic power, together with its total lack of revolutionary fervour or violence, presents the ideal version of the inevitable future: "A majority of such would be the regeneration of the world" (p. 259).

From his opening sentence Pater talks about the type, about "some unworldly types of character which the world is able to estimate", "certain moral types, or categories". He then distinguishes between those "unworldly types" which the world accepts, who have "a breadth and generality of character", and the type which he is bringing to the attention of the reader, and which he calls "Diaphaneitè". This type has no breadth or generality, but is rather a supreme example of "colourless, unclassified purity of life". Pater proceeds to expand upon this impersonal typification of apparently negative qualities. It is, he says, entirely and naturally disinterested, and "this desire for simplicity is a kind of indirect self-assertion of the intellectual part of such natures" (p. 253). This simplicity determines the absolutely transparent nature of its identity, where the inner intellectual life and the outer life are one. Correspondingly, its attitude towards culture "is really directed by the laws of the higher intellectual life" (p. 254). Diaphaneitè prefers directness and clarity in culture "least [sic] one's own confusion and intransparency should hinder the transmission from without of light that is not yet inward" (p. 255). The transparency allows it to appreciate the good things of the present and at the same time welcome change. It is neutral, too, through a "just equipoise" between all its gifts: "Here there is a moral sexlessness, a kind of impotence, an ineffectual wholeness of nature, yet with a divine beauty

and significance of its own" (p. 257). Pater states that this very impotence makes its ideas acceptable for progress.

Pater's claim that such a type should be more in evidence appears to be self-contradictory, for he stresses its capacity for active progress while exploring its quintessential ineffectualness. He concedes that "Not by it could the progress of the world be achieved. It is not the guise of Luther or Spinoza" (p. 257). However, Pater's examples of action--Carlyle's Charlotte Corday, George Eliot's Savonarola--are not the historical personages, but two examples of literary treatment. He is offering precisely the example or the type as an emblem to be contemplated, and which will therefore redirect the world passively. To Pater, this is how Raphael influenced the world. The "world" to which Pater refers is the world of culture where the men of action are thinkers like Luther and Spinoza. These examples show Pater's desire to insert Diaphaneitè, similarly, into the active world of culture.³

"Diaphaneitè" is a complex essay, at once over-full of Pater's ideas, and insufficiently formulated. But in Pater's bold call for change and quiet revolution the essay betrays an iconoclastic strain which was to become evident in The Renaissance. "Diaphaneitè" is the manifesto which introduces the literary character Pater was to use extensively, a character useful both for its features of transparency and Hellenism, and for its role as a passive yet progressive type which will absorb and express its contemporary surroundings. Pater ends "Diaphaneitè" by defining it as "a type of life that might serve as a basement type". (p. 259).

³ In Walter Pater, p. 33, Gerald Monsman says, "as an imaginative creation, Pater's Aesthetic hero ranks with Carlyle's tyrant and Nietzsche's superman in significance".

ii The Early Essays

In the next nine years, Pater was largely occupied with writing The Renaissance.

The Renaissance possesses distinct unity of tone; but its total effect remains somewhat baffling. This partly derives from its being a federation of periodical essays, published over a period when Pater's thought was in rapid evolution. ⁴

As Ian Fletcher says, the essays in The Renaissance betray their diverse origins. The first edition, published in 1873, comprised essays written between 1866 and 1872. There are inevitable contradictions.⁵ However, this very unevenness means that The Renaissance contains in embryo much of Pater's later thought on topics as various as art, literary criticism, cultural development and classical studies. In addition, it is unified through sustained themes and recurrent imagery which help to explain Pater's movement towards an idiosyncratic use of the literary "character". His method of depicting the painters, poets and intellectuals of his generously defined "Renaissance" is intimately connected with his analysis of history and culture. We see from "Diaphaneité" that Pater was drawn towards an ideal type of character derived from his understanding of Hellenism. In the years up to and immediately following the publication of the first edition of The Renaissance, he developed its possibilities for his own writing.

⁴ Fletcher, p. 19.

⁵ This unevenness is increased in later editions of The Renaissance. The third edition (1888) contains a revised and replaced "Conclusion" (it had been omitted in the second edition), and the essay "The School of Giorgione". "The School of Giorgione" was published in the Fortnightly Review on 1 October 1877. Lawrence Evans suspects that a first version of this essay was written, and withdrawn from the projected first edition of The Renaissance, in 1872 (LWP p. 8, n. 1); but "The School of Giorgione" that appears in the third edition reveals a change in Pater's direction of thought that indicates a considerably later date of composition.



Pater's conception of the Renaissance as a period derives from Hegel, Michelet and Burckhardt. It was a conception unavailable to earlier writers such as Ruskin.⁶ As a product of the 1860s, his critical procedure also shows the effect of Darwin's theories and even vocabulary.⁷ To Pater the Renaissance is one of the

eras of more favourable conditions, in which the thoughts of men draw nearer together than is their wont, and the many interests of the intellectual world combine in one complete type of general culture. . . . it is an age productive in personalities, many-sided, centralised, complete. Here, artists and philosophers and those whom the action of the world has elevated and made keen, do not live in isolation, but breathe a common air and catch light and heat from each other's thoughts. There is a spirit of general elevation and enlightenment in which all alike communicate.
(SHR, pp. xiii-xiv)

What interests Pater is the "type of general culture" manifested in the period, and the diverse unity, of independence and community, where men "do not live in isolation". His Hegelian notion of the value of the past as a part of the present directs him to the Renaissance as an age when everyone worked in accord, when they were not isolated, yet

⁶ In "Pater's Conception of the Renaissance: From Sources to Personal Ideal", Victorian Newsletter Nos. 45-8 (1974-5), p. 19, B.A. Inman says: If he had been old enough in the 1840s to write a book about the period immediately following the Middle Ages, he would have inherited, as Ruskin did, a conception of the post-medieval period created by German philosophers and critics in the early nineteenth century and transmitted by Alexis Francois Rio--a period of decline, in which pure Christian faith and native, national art were corrupted by alien pagan elements. That he could have accommodated himself to such a conception is doubtful; certainly, he could not have produced the book that he published in 1873. By an accident of chronology, Pater formed his idea of the Renaissance in the 1860s, when Michelet's and Burckhardt's descriptions of the period were available. . . . Both saw the Renaissance as a step forward that broke the tyranny of a repressive medieval culture.

⁷ See Helen Hawthorne Young, pp. 12-13 for a description of the philosophical currents of the 1860s. Harold Bloom ("Introduction", p. xvii), says, "The Renaissance is already a Darwinian book, rather in the same way that The Stones of Venice was still a Coleridgean book".

were free and independent. Pater's celebration of the Renaissance is an implicit criticism of nineteenth-century England.⁸ The two earliest essays in The Renaissance, "Winckelmann" and the "Conclusion", express Pater's feelings about the culture and life of his own time. Their imagery and themes are the bases of all the other essays in the book.

"Winckelmann" is the earliest essay in The Renaissance.⁹ Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) had been a student of theology and of medicine in what we now know as Germany, and a librarian to Count Heinrich von Bünaü at Nothnitz near Dresden, before he travelled to Italy and embarked on his life's work, a study of antiquity. His Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture (1755) was extremely influential and fostered the development of German neoclassicism. E.H. Gombrich says of Winckelmann's thought:

Winckelmann's praise for the arts of Greece went with a conviction that the whole of Greek civilization accounted for this efflorescence. His conclusion was that this made ancient civilization supreme, the model to which all others should aspire. 10

Winckelmann's masterpiece was his History of Ancient Art (1764) in which he analysed a cycle of growth and decline in Greek art and culture. He derived his Hellenic ideal from Greek literature as much as from its art.

⁸ In the third edition, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (London: Macmillan, 1888), Pater talks more pointedly about the contrast between the Renaissance and his own time: "Here there are no fixed parties, no exclusions: all breathes of that unity of culture in which 'whatsoever things are comely' are reconciled, for the elevation and adorning of our spirits" ("Two Early French Stories"; p. 28).

⁹ It was a review of The History of Ancient Art among the Greeks by John Winckelmann, translated from the German by G.F. Lodge (London: 1850), and of Biographische Aufsätze von Otto Jahn (Leipzig: 1866); it was published in the Westminster Review No. LXI, Vol. LXXXVII (o.s.), January 1867, pp. 80-110.

¹⁰ In Search of Cultural History (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), p. 5.

As well as influencing Lessing, Winckelmann was very important to Goethe, who in 1805 wrote Winckelmann and his Age. Winckelmann also figures in the Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann and Soret.

It has been suggested that Pater may already have read Winckelmann, or Goethe on Winckelmann, in 1864 when he wrote "Diaphaneité".¹¹ There are indisputable links between the two essays, "Diaphaneité" and "Winckelmann". Both Diaphaneité and Winckelmann are likened to Greek statuary:

Its ethical result is an intellectual guilelessness, or integrity, that instinctively prefers what is direct and clear, lest one's own confusion and intransparency should hinder the transmission from without of light that is not yet inward. (MS, p. 255)

The beauty of the Greek statues was a sexless beauty; the statues of the gods had the least traces of sex. Here there is a moral sexlessness, a kind of impotence, an ineffectual wholeness of nature, yet with a divine beauty and significance of its own. (p. 257)

Occupied ever with himself, perfecting himself and cultivating his genius, he was not content, as so often happens with such natures, that the atmosphere between him and other minds should be thick and clouded; he was ever jealously refining his meaning into a form, express, clear, objective. . . . was a sexless beauty. The beauty of the Greek statues / the statues of the gods had the least traces of sex. Here, there is a moral sexlessness, a kind of impotence, an ineffectual wholeness of nature, yet with a divine beauty and significance of its own. (SHR, p. 194).

However, whereas in "Diaphaneité" Pater is free to attribute any number of Hellenic characteristics to his ideal, in "Winckelmann" he is constrained to deal with the facts of a real man's life. He therefore removes "the clear ring, the eternal outline of the genuine antique" from the character to the tradition which Winckelmann introduced:

¹¹ Francis X. Roellinger, "Intimations of Winckelmann in Pater's Diaphaneité", English Language Notes 11 (June 1965), pp. 279-81.

Such a character is like a relic from the classical age, laid open by accident to our alien modern atmosphere. It has something of the clear ring, the eternal outline of the antique. (MS, p. 255)

This key to the understanding of the Greek spirit, Winckelmann possessed in his own nature, itself like a relic of classical antiquity laid open by accident to our alien modern atmosphere. (SHR, p. 193)

Voltaire belongs to that flimsier, more artificial, classical tradition, which Winckelmann was one day to supplant by the clear ring, the eternal outline of the genuine antique. (p. 150)

The demands of factual truth also cause Pater to attempt to accommodate Winckelmann within his ideal of completeness:

To most of us only one chance is given in the life of the spirit and the intellect, and circumstances prevent our dexterously seizing that one chance. . . . Our collective life, pressing equally on every part of every one of us, reduces nearly all of us to the level of a colourless uninteresting existence. Others are neutralised, not by suppression of gifts, but by just equipoise among them. (MS, p. 257)

But then the artistic interest was that by desperate faithfulness to which Winckelmann was saved from the mediocrity which, breaking through no bounds, moves ever in a bloodless routine, and misses its one chance in the life of the spirit and the intellect. There have been instances of culture developed by every high motive in turn, and yet intense at every point; and the aim of our culture should be to attain not only as intense but as complete a life as possible. But often the higher life is only possible at all on condition of a selection of that in which one's motive is native and strong; (SHR, pp. 157-8)

In "Winckelmann" the word "culture" appears forty-one times.¹² The essay has been called a "miniature aesthetic history of Western culture"; its purpose described as "defining the culture which Winckelmann represents and placing it in relation both to the supreme figure of Goethe

¹² Helen Hawthorne Young, p. 63, says:

The 'gospel of intensity' there expressed is fitted into a scheme of 'culture'. The word is vague, but the incessant repetition of it-- I count it forty times and more in this one essay--is repeated, as Elton says, 'in the accent others keep for words like grace and holiness'.

himself and to the 'modern world'."¹³ In the opening paragraph of the essay Pater quotes Goethe and Hegel. Goethe saw in Winckelmann "an abstract type of culture, consummate, tranquil, withdrawn already into the region of ideals, yet retaining colour from the incidents of a passionate intellectual life" (SHR, p. 146). Hegel saw him as an initiator of "a new organ for the human spirit", and Pater adds, "That it has given a new sense, that it has laid open a new organ, is the highest that can be said of any critical effort" (pp. 146-7). Between Winckelmann and Hegel a change had occurred in cultural philosophy. Herder had argued against Winckelmann's claims for the supremacy of Greek culture, saying that those conditions could never return, and that "if art is embedded in culture we must accept that different cultures produce different arts".¹⁴ Hegel subsequently claimed that everything is the product of the Zeitgeist and that the whole system of the arts is a temporal hierarchy reflecting the progressive development of the Spirit. He therefore proved that "each art and culture existed in its own right and could not be judged by other standards; and yet this proof did not invalidate the equally intuitive conviction that the history of civilization was and remained a history of growing values, a history of progress". These philosophers are some of Pater's mentors in "Winckelmann", and in this essay he

¹³ William H Sullivan, "Four Early Studies from Pater's The Renaissance: The Aesthetics for a Humanist Myth", Victorian Newsletter No. 40 (Fall 1971), p. 1; Richard S. Lyons, "The 'Complex, Many-sided' Unity of The Renaissance", Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, Vol. 12 (1972), 772.

¹⁴ This summary is taken, and quoted, from Gombrich, pp. 5-13.

discusses Winckelmann's and Hegel's ideas of culture.¹⁵

To Pater, in Winckelmann's dreams of Classical art, "there seems always to be rather a wistful sense of something lost to be regained, than the desire of discovering anything new" (p. 148). Winckelmann therefore symbolizes for Pater one element of the Renaissance: the return to Classicism. The desperate barrenness of German culture in the eighteenth century meant that only through a rigid discipline did Winckelmann make "a step forward in culture. He multiplied his intellectual force by detaching from it all flaccid interests" (p. 150). Self-restraint was necessary to his mission of forming an "effective classical tradition in German literature" from which Goethe was later to benefit. Winckelmann's introduction to Greek art is a re-enactment of the Renaissance:

Filled as our culture is with the classical spirit, we can hardly imagine how deeply the human mind was moved when at the Renaissance, in the midst of a frozen world, the buried fire of ancient art rose up from under the soil. Winckelmann here reproduces for us the earlier sentiment of the Renaissance. On a sudden the imagination feels itself free. (p. 153)

This freedom, so central to Pater's conception of the Renaissance, is discernible in Winckelmann's sensuous appreciation of Greek art, in place of an abstract intellectualism. Winckelmann is a paradigm of the early Renaissance in this essay. To Pater, "Winckelmann's first years in Rome present all the elements of an intellectual situation of the highest interest" (p. 159). The advent of a new German literature through Winckelmann's work is similar to the advent of the Renaissance through Dante: in both instances, according to Pater,

¹⁵ "Duke Carl of Rosenmold", which owes many phrases to "Winckelmann", places Duke Carl more precisely in this German philosophical tradition when Herder is referred to at the end.

Hellenism was the catalyst. Winckelmann courted Hellenism intensely:

He is en rapport with it; it penetrates him, and becomes part of his temperament. He remodels his writings with constant renewal of insight; he catches the thread of a whole sequence of laws in some hollowing of the hand, or dividing of the hair; he seems to realise that fancy of the reminiscence of a forgotten knowledge hidden for a time in the mind itself. (pp. 164-5)

However, like Dante and Abelard, he is a forerunner whose pioneering efforts allow others, later, to reap the benefits of a complete intensity.

In spite of Winckelmann's rigid self-discipline, Goethe paid homage to his influence, and defined him as the ideal of "elasticity, wholeness, intellectual integrity" (p. 154). Pater finds it difficult to reconcile the facts of Winckelmann's narrowness with what he would praise in him, and with Goethe's claim. Goethe, after all, had a "various energy" (p. 154). So Pater attempts to justify both Winckelmann, and Goethe's opinion: "Within its severe limits his enthusiasm burns like lava" (p. 155). The problem of Winckelmann's dubious conversion to Roman Catholicism in order to reach Rome forces Pater to advocate the importance of intensity over completeness in a culture as barren as that of eighteenth-century Germany:

But then the artistic interest was that by desperate faithfulness to which Winckelmann was saved from the mediocrity which, breaking through no bounds, moves ever in a bloodless routine, and misses its one chance in the life of the spirit and the intellect. There have been instances of culture developed by every high motive in turn, and yet intense at every point; and the aim of our culture should be to attain not only as intense but as complete a life as possible. But often the higher life is only possible at all on condition of a selection of that in which one's motive is native and strong; and this selection involves the renunciation of a crown reserved for others. Which is better; to lay open a new sense, to initiate a new organ for the human spirit, or to cultivate many types of perfection up to a point which leaves us still beyond the range of their transforming power? Savonarola is one type of success; Winckelmann is another; criticism can reject neither, because each is true to itself. (pp. 157-8)

Hellenism is a "buried fire" which rises "up from under the soil"; Winckelmann's similar "enthusiasm burns like lava". Later in the essay Pater says that "The supreme Hellenic culture is a sharp edge of light" (p. 175). These metaphors are all of a single shaft piercing through "bounds", and breaking through into the realms of a "transforming power". Pater's ideal is that of many shafts all breaking through: like Goethe's "various energy", a completeness of intensity. In the "Conclusion", burning with a flame (akin to the Hellenic shaft of light) is "success in life" (p. 210). Here, both Winckelmann and Savonarola are "types" of success. Savonarola is a type determined by his age, and one-sided. The implicit identification of Winckelmann with Hellenism lends him an aura of more complete success, although unlike the flame of the "Conclusion", his is not a complete intensity, for he too was struggling against his age, was a forerunner.

The middle section of "Winckelmann" is a theoretical examination of Greek art. Pater stresses the autonomy of Hellenism, its capacity to rise up periodically:

The spiritual forces of the past, which have prompted and informed the culture of a succeeding age, live, indeed, within that culture, but with an absorbed, underground life. The Hellenic element alone has not been so absorbed or content with this underground life; from time to time it has started to the surface; culture has been drawn back to its sources to be clarified and corrected. Hellenism is not merely an element in our intellectual life; it is a conscious tradition in it. (p. 169)

Pater poses a contrast between absorption and consciousness, between an underground life and clarity. The imagery is repeated throughout The Renaissance. His assertion here, that Hellenism is a "conscious tradition", never to be absorbed, echoes Winckelmann's own ideas on the importance of Hellenism. But then Pater goes on to quote, unacknowledged, Hegel's theory of the autonomy of each age within a progressive continuum.

However, there is, he adds, "an element of permanence, a standard of taste", which is Hellenism. This contradiction runs through Pater's entire analysis of Greek art. To Pater, the roots of Hellenism in Greek religion, and the sensuous inclinations of the Greeks, combine to create art which is a perfect fusion of form and matter. The "Venus of Melos", for example, is

in no sense a symbol, a suggestion of anything beyond its own victorious fairness. The mind begins and ends with the finite image, yet loses no part of the spiritual motive. That motive is not lightly and loosely attached to the sensuous form, as the meaning to the allegory, but saturates and is identical with it. (p. 178)

This art is a perfect moment. Pater then hastens to add that it has already "committed itself to a train of reflection which must end in a defiance of form" (p. 178). It is an "ideal art", and therefore prompts a profound nostalgia in Pater; "ideal" here means "existing as an idea or archetype; relating to or consisting of ideas (in the Platonic sense)", as well as "Conceived or regarded as perfect or supremely excellent in its kind; answering to one's highest conception".¹⁶ The perfect moment of this art is supremely valuable, but its passing was inevitable. So Pater returns to Hegel's theory of the logical progression of the arts: "As the mind itself has had an historical development, one form of art, by the very limitations of its material, may be more adequate than another for the expression of any one phase of its experience" (p. 182). Following Hegel, Pater traces the various forms of expression suited to the ages, and calls painting, music and poetry "the special arts of the romantic and modern ages" (p. 183). The limitation, therefore, of sculpture, which has earlier been called "a standard of

¹⁶ These definitions are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary.

taste", is that it is not sufficiently complex for the modern world. Instead, it is "a perfect medium of expression for one peculiar motive of the imaginative intellect" (p. 184). This motive is to "unveil man in the repose of his unchanging characteristics" (p. 185). The essence of Hellenism is therefore, Pater says, "Heiterkeit, blitheness or repose, and Allgemeinheit, generality or breadth". He stresses that they "come of a culture minute, severe, constantly renewed, rectifying and concentrating its impressions into certain pregnant types" (p. 186). We may note how closely this approaches Winckelmann's self-restraint. Pater has gradually shifted from describing Hellenism as a permanent standard of taste to analysing it as the expression of one particular age; but the elements of Hellenism, its emphasis on "man in the repose of his unchanging characteristics", preserves Hellenism from being absorbed into the cycles of history.

Pater begins then to examine the relationship of Hellenism to his own age. By means of a definition of artistic genius, he shows how these Hellenic ideas operate in the art of his own age. Poetry and painting can reflect anything and everything of life, but even then the ideal poem "has the clear ring of a central motive; we receive from it the impression of one imaginative tone, of a single creative act" (p. 188). However, he does draw a distinction between poetry and painting, and sculpture: in its fusion of variety and unity, poetry is superior to sculpture, for modern life is far more complex than Greek life, and

In poetry and painting, the situation predominates over the character; in sculpture, the character over the situation. Excluded by the limitations of its material from the development of exquisite situations, it has to choose from a select number of types intrinsically interesting, interesting that is, independently of any special situation into which they may be thrown. (p. 188)

In this contrast between character and situation, Pater is distinguishing

between the "type" which will embody the artist's conception and meaning, and the form which demands extrinsic support for its full expression.

Winckelmann's self-restraint is a parallel of Hellenic restraint. He reflects its generality and breadth in his temperament: "Minute and anxious as his culture was, he never became one-sidedly self-analytical" (p. 194). His serenity when dealing with the sensuous aspects of Greek sculpture is the Heiterkeit of the Hellenic ideal. Like the perfect moment of fusion before Greek tragedy, Winckelmann concentrated on the perfect form, and "Living in a world of exquisite but abstract and colourless form, he could hardly have conceived of the subtle and penetrative, but somewhat grotesque art of the modern world" (p. 197). This parallel nature transforms Winckelmann himself into an example of Hellenism, "a relic of classical antiquity" as Pater says (p. 193). Thus, although Winckelmann is portrayed in other sections of the essay as a paradigm of the early Renaissance, a reflection of change and progress, his static symbolism and resemblance to Greek sculpture places him: "The aim of a right criticism is to place Winckelmann in an intellectual perspective, of which Goethe is the foreground" (p. 200). Goethe unites Romanticism and Hellenism; the Hellenism came to him from Winckelmann "as in a fragment of Greek art itself, stranded on that littered, indeterminate shore of Germany in the eighteenth century. In Winckelmann this type comes to him, not as in a book or a theory, but importunately, in a passionate life and personality" (p. 202). In his presentation of Winckelmann, Pater encapsulates Hellenism for his readers in the type--the life and personality--of Winckelmann. Significantly, he contrasts this typification with books and theories. The problem for Goethe, and for Pater's time, is "Can the Allgemeinheit and

Heiterkeit of the antique be communicated to artistic productions which contain the fulness of the experience of the modern world?" (p. 204).

Pater has referred to the complexity of modern life throughout the essay, and when he comes to describe it, a tone of anguish is unmistakable. Modern life for Pater has "conflicting claims . . . entangled interests", is "distracted by so many sorrows, so many preoccupations", is "so bewildering an experience" (pp. 201-2). Unity, therefore, is very difficult. Yet modern life is also more constricting than ever before:

For us necessity is not as of old an image without us, with whom we can do warfare; it is a magic web woven through and through us, like that magnetic system of which modern science speaks, penetrating us with a network subtler than our subtlest nerves, yet bearing in it the central forces of the world. 17

Art should give life a sense of freedom from "these bewildering toils", and this is the contribution that Hellenism can make; that it does make in the work of Goethe and Hugo. Pater's concluding sentence is ambiguous, expressing both regret and praise for modern life and this new emergence of Hellenism: "Who, if he foresaw all, would fret against circumstances which endow one at the end with so high an experience?"¹⁸

Coexisting in "Winckelmann" there is a nostalgia for the comparatively simple Greek ideal, and an apotheosis of Goethe; a magnificent celebration of Hellenism in the potent imagery of a rising shaft of fire, and a regret that Hellenism alone cannot break through "the chain of

¹⁷ p. 205. In the third edition of The Renaissance Pater has altered the words "an image without us" to "a sort of mythological personage without us". This revision strengthens the opposition he creates between the "type" as means of expression in Greek art, complete in itself, and intact, and complex modern art.

¹⁸ p. 206. In the third edition of The Renaissance Pater has expanded "circumstances" into "the chain of circumstances". This revision accentuates the development of increasingly complex art, and so, correspondingly, the power of Hellenism to affect all culture.

circumstance". Winckelmann is used by Pater as a "type", expressing Pater's conception of Hellenism; yet at the same time Pater talks of modern art as allowing situation to predominate over character. Many critics have discerned a contradiction in Pater's theories between self-discipline and expansion.¹⁹ There is, rather, a sense of compromise, which is accentuated in the "Conclusion".

The "Conclusion" is the last part of the review "Poems by William Morris".²⁰ The first two sections of the review discuss William Morris's poetry and its return to the past, to Greek and medieval times, for its themes. This is not a direct return, but a refinement on what was already a refinement on reality: "It is a finer ideal, extracted from what in relation to any actual world is already an ideal".²¹ This enables Pater to describe the attitude which nineteenth-century Romanticism has adopted towards the past. It has reacted from stale eighteenth-century neo-Classicism by reverting to a "true Hellenism" and to medievalism. Pater gives the examples of Goethe, Scott, Hugo and Heine as leaders in this movement, and the implication is that Morris has done the same. He looks back to a true Hellenism, and to a "stricter, imaginative

¹⁹ See for example, Bloom, p. xviii. Appleman, p. 81, detects a similar contradiction between "the impressionistic and the historical" in Pater's work.

²⁰ It was a review of The Defence of Guenevere and other Poems (1858), The Life and Death of Jason: a Poem (1867), and The Earthly Paradise: a Poem (1868); it was published in the Westminster Review No. LXVIII, Vol. XC (o.s.), October 1868, pp. 300-12. I am discussing the complete review because the first two sections (which were later included in the first edition of Appreciations under the title "Aesthetic Poetry"), are relevant to the final part. They are also closely related to the discussion of culture in "Winckelmann", written about eighteen months before.

²¹ "Poems by William Morris", p. 300. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary by "PWM".

medievalism which recreates the mood of the middle age, so that the form, the presentment grows outward from within" (p. 301).

In talking about Morris's The Defence of Guenevere, first of all, Pater can therefore describe his conception of the middle ages.²² He develops from the statement that,

That whole religion of the middle age was but a beautiful disease or disorder of the senses; and a religion which is a disorder of the senses must always be subject to illusions,

his idea of the imprisonment which characterizes the middle ages, caused by illusion and delirium. Consequently, everything was exaggerated then: "A passion of which the outlets are sealed begets a tension of nerve". Nature is not an objective or external phenomenon; it is "no real escape to the world without one", and is "in conspiracy with one's brain against one" (p. 303). The words "sealed", "escape" and "conspiracy" betray the hostility Pater senses in this culture. The human psyche is depicted as being alienated from everything and attacked by the beliefs and systems of the middle ages. It is an "electric atmosphere" (p. 304). This distortion of life is a result of an enforced and confined subjectivity.

In moving from The Defence of Guenevere to The Life and Death of Jason Pater identifies the shift from medievalism to Hellenism in the following terms:

²² Much of Pater's analysis of the middle ages reappears in "Aucassin and Nicolette", demonstrating once again Pater's self-quotation. Pater says, for example, "And so in these imaginative loves, in their highest expression the Provencal poetry, it is a rival religion with a new rival cultus that we see" ("PWM", p. 301). In "Aucassin and Nicolette" he says: "In their search after the pleasures of the senses and the imagination, in their care for beauty, in their worship of the body, people were impelled beyond the bounds of the primitive Christian ideal; and their love became a strange idolatry, a strange rival religion" (SHR, p. 15).

Here there is no delirium or illusion, no experiences of mere soul while the body and the bodily senses sleep or wake with convulsed intensity at the prompting of imaginative love; but rather the great primary passions under broad daylight. (p. 305)

This is the transition that Pater detects at the beginning of the Renaissance, and which he describes in "Aucassin and Nicolette".²³

In the Hellenic culture nature does have an objective reality. The symbol of the distinction between Hellenic and medieval which Pater uses is their respective attitudes towards the dawn: in this turning-point of the night and the day, which recurs throughout The Renaissance, lies the germ of all his subsequent imagery of death and dying, darkness and light, and capturing the fleeting moment.

After examining the characteristics of the two cultures, Pater stresses that neither can be recaptured totally. The reason for returning to the past is to relate it to nineteenth-century culture:

it is possible to isolate such a phase, to throw it into relief, to be divided against ourselves in zeal for it, as we may hark back to some choice space of our own individual life. We cannot conceive the age; we can conceive the element it has contributed to our culture; we can treat the subjects of the age bringing that into relief. Such an attitude towards Greece, aspiring to but never actually reaching its way of conceiving life, is what is possible for art. (p. 307)

Hellenism has become an "element . . . contributed to our culture" and is compared with the equal force of medievalism. The moment of cultural change which appeals to Pater is the release of Hellenism in the middle ages. What later became an introductory chapter of The Renaissance is here his main interest. He calls the true, accomplished Renaissance

²³ Significantly, Pater personifies the transition as the effect of Hellenism, a sensuous daylight, upon a medieval monk:

Just so the monk in his cloister, through the 'open vision', open only to the spirit, divined, aspired to and at least apprehended a better daylight, but earthly, open only to the senses. ("PWM", p. 305)

He was to return to this theme in "Apollo in Picardy", twenty-five years later.

"exaggerated and facile" (p. 307). "Poems by William Morris" shows the shift from Pater's reverence for Hellenism to his concern for the mixed lights of the Renaissance, and consequently, for the muddled lights of his own times.

After describing Morris's poetry, Pater turns to the disinterested question of quite how this reversion to the past, where the desire for beauty is paramount, can be justified in the present day; how it does have bearing on the culture of his own time. For, he suggests, the argument would stress how different the world seems after recent scientific discoveries:

The modern world is in possession of truths; what but a passing smile can it have for a kind of poetry which, assuming beauty of form to be an end in itself, passes by those truths and the living interests which are connected with them, to spend a thousand cares in telling once more these pagan fables as if it had but to choose between a more and a less beautiful shadow? (p. 309)

Science has laid claim to truth, and dispensed with the importance of beauty as an absolute value. Pater sets himself the task of showing why beauty and art still have a vital part to play in modern life.

The final section explores this challenge. It was to become familiar as the "Conclusion" of The Renaissance. Inconstancy in "all things and principles of things" has become the modern tendency, Pater says. This is largely due to modern scientific analysis, which has reduced all experience and matter to their volatile elements. A moment of intense personal pleasure, such as "the moment . . . of delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat" becomes merely "a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names" (SHR, p. 207). Life becomes an impersonal motion of elements, a motion which is only one of many, for the action of the same elements also "rusts iron and ripens corn" (p. 208). All uniqueness of humanity

therefore disappears, and

That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours under which we group them--a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it.

This dissolution is unavoidable and inevitable. The word "forces" is used four times in this paragraph.²⁴ What happens with external reality also occurs for the inner life: the same evidence of the destruction of man's "images" has been forced upon men, and reduces everything to a state of discreteness. Here emotive words such as "whirlpool" and "devouring" occur. Combined with the dispersal of outline is the motion of the elements. They are always fleeting, passing away. Pater contrasts this death of impressions with the more acceptable, and peaceful, diminishment of vision at death²⁵: the motion of fleeting impressions is constantly recurring, "a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought". Experience may appear to be importunate, calling us out of ourselves and rousing us to action, but on reflection all such "external objects" with a relevance to external life lose their coherence: "each object is loosed into a group of impressions,--colour, odour, texture,-- in the mind of the observer" (p. 209).

²⁴ Alan W. Bellringer points out that in the 1893 and 1910 texts one of these 'forces' is altered to the milder 'currents' . . . suggesting, if not the possibility of direction, at least some kind of continuity in the physical world, as extended in space, whereas the main point of this paragraph is that human life has a flame-like, momentarily flickering quality of inconstancy as its essence. (op. cit., pp. 48-9)

²⁵ c.f. Pater's phrase "the gradual darkening of the eye and fading of colour from the wall" (p. 310) with Tennyson's stanza in The Princess (1847), Part IV:

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Experience has therefore changed from being communal, understandable in a society, "in the solidity with which language invests" it, to indefinable impressions. These in turn are transient, momentary, and are extinguished. Thus "the whole scope of observation is dwarfed to the narrow chamber of the individual mind", because the social whole has dissipated into impressions which can only be subjective and are totally dependent on the individual's mind. As well as being dissipated, experience is enclosed and imprisoned in one mind, and has no necessary relevance to anything outside it: "Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world". The placing of the phrase "as a solitary prisoner" in this sentence gives it two referents; both the mind and the "dream of a world" are prisoners.

This is not enough. Pater tells us that "Analysis goes a step further still", and that those imprisoned impressions are in "perpetual flight". Eventually,

To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down. It is with the movement, the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off,--that continual vanishing away, that strange perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves. (pp. 209-10)

This compelling vision of non-existence is followed in "Poems by William Morris" by a remarkable passage which Pater omitted from every subsequent version of the "Conclusion". It tells us precisely what Pater feels

about the state of modern life as he sees it²⁶:

Such thoughts seem desolate at first; at times all the bitterness of life seems concentrated in them. They bring the image of one washed out beyond the bar in a sea at ebb, losing even his personality, as the elements of which he is composed pass into new combinations. Struggling, as he must, to save himself, it is himself that he loses at every moment. ("PWM", p. 311)

This sense of exclusion after so much imagery of restriction and imprisonment attests to a deep confusion and depression. The isolation is made worse by the loss of one's very personality.

Thus he turns to philosophy, a system such as he had rejected in "Winckelmann" in favour of a type or personality. The function of philosophy, for Pater, is to "startle [the human spirit] into a sharp and eager observation" (SHR, p. 210). As impressions are so momentary, so certain impressions attain their beauty only momentarily. Therefore we must contrive to experience as many of these flashes as possible, and we must "pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy". It is this focus, unity, purity of energy, which is the "hard gem-like flame". The volcanic flame of Hellenism is here transformed into an active principle in the human mind, rather than being a passive example of a standard of culture. In its swift movement from point to point, the "flame" is inimical to "habit", for that only

²⁶ It should be stressed here that Pater later seems to have repudiated this explicit depression. In Plato and Platonism he says: In truth, what was sympathetic with the hour and the scene in the Heraclitean doctrine, was the boldly aggressive, the paradoxical and negative tendency there, in natural collusion, as it was, with the destructiveness of undisciplined youth; that sense of rapid dissolution, which, according to one's temperament and one's luck in things, might extinguish, or kindle all the more eagerly, an interest in the mere phenomena of existence, of one's so hasty passage through the world. (p. 13, my emphasis)

presupposes a "stereotyped" world which will remain the same, and the most beautiful things are so only for a moment.²⁷ The impressions culled by the active principle of burning with a flame would "by a lifted horizon . . . set the spirit free for a moment" (p. 211): another image of release from an apparently immutable imprisonment. Burial underground and enclosure by the horizon are both natural, timeless states for the dead and the living respectively.

For Pater, the relationship between the living and the dead is a very close one. He freely interchanges images of burial and living imprisonment, images of life rising from death (as a volcano rises) and of death within life (losing one's personality beyond the bar). He is fascinated in the moment of change: the turning-point between day and night, for example. In the final paragraph of the "Conclusion" Pater explores the effect of the imminence of death. He has already commented on

one characteristic of the pagan spirit these new poems have which is on their surface--the continual suggestion, pensive or passionate, of the shortness of life; this is contrasted with the bloom of the world and gives new seduction to it; the sense of death and the desire of beauty; the desire of beauty quickened by the sense of death. ("PWM", p. 309)

The desire of beauty is quickened by the sense of urgency caused by a permanent possibility of death. Pater says that our "one chance is in expanding that interval" before the certitude of death (SHR, p. 212).

²⁷ The use of "stereotype" here is a fine contrast with Pater's customary use of the term "type", and it is perhaps this finesse which has caused many critics to sense confusions where there is only a conscious compromise. Hellenism, as a "flame" like the "hard gem-like flame" is a type in its generality; Savonarola and Winckelmann are types of success in that they represent the independence and dedication stimulated by their respective times; stereotype is, on the contrary, a confining and not a quintessential or representative phenomenon.

Art gives most pulsations because that is what it is expressly for.

Pater is therefore concerned with the loss of identity, both physical and mental, and with the paradoxical imprisonment of every individual by this universal phenomenon of dissolution. Isolation is depicted as a barrier, a bar, a wall, a prison. Theories are similar boundaries to the spirit who would be free and find itself in a community and a unity of impressions which form a "hard gem-like flame". The ever-receptive mind may have more power to see a deeper truth than the systems which enable us to think we find truth.

Pater's description derives from recent scientific discovery.²⁸ The isolation and dissolution he evokes are a direct result of this scientific analysis when it is focussed on humanity. In "Poems by William Morris" the preceding challenge, that "the modern world is in possession of truth", shows that he is talking about a post-scientific world ironically, as a place where people no longer take beauty seriously. His personal response betrays bereavement after security. In the "Conclusion", on the other hand, the reference to recent scientific discovery is muted by the abrupt opening lines and by the epigraph from Heraclitus, which implies that this sense of dissolution is a state of humanity which science has only confirmed, and which was

²⁸ See Fletcher, p. 28: "And to Mr Ward's invocation of Darwin, we can add contemporary biological theory, particularly that of Virchow, who posits in his Cellular Pathologie of 1858 'an eternal law of continuous development' in terms of cells". In "Style" Pater points out that language "must needs change along with the changing thoughts of living people", and he goes on to say:

For many years to come its enterprise may well lie in the naturalisation of the vocabulary of science, so only it be under the eye of a sensitive scholarship--in a liberal naturalisation of the ideas of science too, for after all the chief stimulus of good style is to possess a full, rich, complex matter to grapple with. The literary artist, therefore, will be well aware of physical science; science also attaining, in its turn, its true literary ideal. (App. p. 12)

evident all the time to people of a certain temperament.²⁹ Pater's personal reaction is also omitted. This has the effect of conferring a timeless authority on the statements, and suggests that security never existed. Art is and has been the only answer. The sense of bereavement has gone, leaving in its stead a permanent and timeless anguish evident in every line of the chapter. Paradoxically, it becomes a far more personal statement, for it is no longer an imperative which the development of science has thrust upon mankind.

Everywhere in The Renaissance there is a celebration of breaking through bounds, expanding, discarding systems and philosophies. This is a solution to the painful isolation described in the "Conclusion". Yet the exhortation to break through constrictions and to expand brings with it the risk of dissolution, and, paradoxically, of exclusion "beyond the bar". In his suppressed paragraph in "Poems by William Morris" Pater's image is of being swept passively out to sea on the ebb of the tide, which then maroons the swimmer far out, excluding him from the fellowship on the shore.³⁰ Hence Pater's emphasis on a unity or completeness of intense expansion. The psyche, in both "Winckelmann" and the "Conclusion", is not an impermeable entity, but a fragile object characterized by its discreteness. In "Winckelmann", instead of the Greeks' contained, personified Necessity, for instance, Pater talks

²⁹ The epigraph, translated, runs: "Heraclitus says, 'All things give way; nothing remains'", and it is taken from Plato's Cratylus. Bloom, op. cit., p. 62, interprets "the tendency of modern thought" as being a Hegelian allusion, which may by the third edition have become a Darwinian reference. But Darwin's ideas were widely familiar by 1873.

³⁰ The imagery is so deliberate here that it seems likely that Pater is consciously echoing two earlier Victorian poems: Tennyson's stoically optimistic "Crossing the Bar", and Matthew Arnold's tragic "Dover Beach".

of modern necessity as a "magic web woven through and through us . . . penetrating us with a network subtler than our subtlest nerves, yet bearing in it the central forces of the world" (p. 205). The barrier between self and the world is non-existent, yet the threads of the web are constricting.³¹ In the "Conclusion" these threads cause "that strange perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves" (p. 210). In "Diaphaneitè" Pater presents an ideal type of personality that will have autonomy yet will retain a transparency, and therefore an ease, of communication with the world. Pater wants to establish that relationship again, for modern man, by converting his subjects into "images" of face and limb. Yet to prevent isolation, there must be extension. The constricting and simultaneously dissolving threads become an egress from the thick wall of the personality.³²

³¹ In Walter Pater, p. 59, Gerald Monsman describes this appositely: Instead of the stable paradigm of a sharply bounded circle of self within the larger circumference of not-self, Pater suggests a paradigm of process in which there is no enduring circle of self (only an asterisk, a star-bright center) since at every moment the self is being defined anew as the elemental threads (physical properties or mental impressions) are added and subtracted. Within the flux there is simply a succession of selves, each of which contains only 'a relic' (Renaissance, p. 209) of the self that preceded it.

³² This preoccupation surfaces once again in Henry James's The Portrait of a Lady (1881), in a conversation between Madame Merle and Isabella: 'There's no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our "self"? Where does it begin? where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us--and then it flows back again. I know a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've a great respect for things! One's self--for other people--is one's expression of one's self; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps--these things are all expressive.' . . . 'I don't agree with you. I think just the other way. I don't know whether I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me. Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything's on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one.' (London: Penguin, 1963, pp. 201-2)

The techniques of the artists discussed in The Renaissance all reflect this ideal of extension. Michelangelo expresses through sculpture the introspection, the movement into the personality, which the Renaissance heralds.³³ Leonardo da Vinci interests himself in science, and "The science of that age was all divination, clairvoyance" (p. 99); his curiosity leads him to studies where "He learned . . . the art of going deep, of tracking the sources of expression to their subtlest retreats" (p. 96). At the same time, what he seeks are the correspondences "which exist between the different orders of living things, through which, to eyes opened, they interpret each other" (p. 96). Despite his severe self-discipline, Winckelmann is able to penetrate the world of classical art: "He is en rapport with it; it penetrates him, and becomes part of his temperament. He remodels his writings with constant renewal of insight; he catches the thread of a whole sequence of laws" (p. 164, my emphases). This penetration is also something which Pater aims for in his criticism: he says wistfully, "One longs to penetrate into the lives of the men who have given expression to so much power and sweetness" (p. 52).

However, penetration is not the ideal, for it is dangerously close to the passive web of necessity. The ultimate ideal is the intensity and completeness that Goethe attained, whose self-culture is active and receptive while abstaining from being adoptive. This is what Pater encourages his readers to strive for when he intones in the "Preface", "Education grows in proportion as one's susceptibility to these

³³ This was of course a part of Pater's theory of the emergence of Romanticism in the Renaissance. The imagery begins to reverse from rising to delving. The thematic connection of Leonardo with death, in his paintings and his curiosity, is a logical adjunct to the reversal of Hellenic eruption to Romantic delving: back underground to death.

impressions increases in depth and variety" (p. ix). It is also what informs his own critical practice and what he discerns in the greatest artists of the Renaissance.

iii Individuality and Representativeness

While he was writing the essays which were to complete The Renaissance as a volume, in the summer of 1872, Pater wrote one review for the Academy, on Children in Italian and English Design.³⁴ He calls the book

a good specimen of that best and most legitimate sort of writing on art which has for its aim the adjustment of a special knowledge of artists and their work to the needs and interests of general culture. (p. 267)

In the "Preface" Pater reminds us that the genius is always above his own age: "'The ages are all equal', says William Blake, 'but genius is always above its age'."³⁵ He proceeds to discern "one type of general culture" in the Renaissance, when men of stature "do not live in isolation, but breathe a common air" (SHR, pp. xiii-xiv). In the third edition of The Renaissance Pater explains this apparent contradiction.

³⁴ op. cit. It is interesting to note that on the page that Pater's review finishes, there is an announcement of the discovery of classical relics which had been dug up; Pater must have been pleased to observe the practical occurrence of what he envisages in "Winckelmann":

Some works undertaken in connection with the construction of a new street at Lucera have brought to light a statue of Venus, a marble vase, and portions of a mosaic pavement. The Venus is about seven hands high, and is undraped; at her feet are a child and a dolphin. The figure is broken, but no piece is wanting, and the Italian papers speak of it as good work, without assigning any date. The vase bears the inscription: 'Divo Commodo'. The authorities have undertaken to carry on the excavations, and there is every likelihood of their being richly rewarded, for Lucera is the ancient Luceria, and the soil teems with antiquities. (pp. 268-9)

³⁵ William Blake, "Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses," The Complete Writings of William Blake (London: OUP, 1966), p. 461.

The reason he gives for selecting the Renaissance as a period for study is that the artists at once express their age and soar above it.

And just in proportion as those who took part in the Renaissance become centrally representative of it, just so much the more is this condition realised in them. The wicked popes, and the loveless tyrants, who from time to time became its patrons, or mere speculators in its fortunes, lend themselves easily to disputations, and, from this side or that, the spirit of controversy lays just hold upon them. But the painter of the Last Supper, with his kindred, live in a land where controversy has no breathing-place, and refuse to be classified. 36

To Pater the common earlier nineteenth-century view of the Renaissance as a time of violence and bloodshed is mistaken.³⁷ He rejects "the wicked popes, and the loveless tyrants" as representatives of the age. In a clever twist, he suggests that their very unrepresentativeness is what makes them available to controversy and nineteenth-century disapproval: the artists he will proceed to discuss are, he implies, too great to be dealt with in this way, and this is why they truly represent the Renaissance. This refusal to be classified fulfils the criteria of unity and independence. The artists maintain a unifying representativeness through a generalizing process, a distinction made by Pater of "type" in genius. In his review of Children in Italian and English Design Pater comments that Colvin omits Sir Joshua Reynolds from his study because

³⁶ The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (London: Macmillan, 1888), pp. 28-9.

³⁷ This was particularly prevalent earlier in the century, and was given most explicit expression by Ruskin in The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849) where he talks of "the foul torrent of the Renaissance" (Works, Vol. 8, p. 98). In Golden Codgers: Biographical Speculations (London: OUP, 1973), pp. 51-2, Richard Ellmann discusses the opposition between Ruskin and Pater over the nature of the Renaissance in terms of their attitudes towards sexuality.

in portrait-painting the general temper and sentiment of the artist are controlled by the exigencies of his special function and the necessity of dealing directly with the special and individual traits of the subject in hand; and what Mr Colvin wishes to seize and analyse is a 'type', a mode of conceiving childhood generally.

Here Pater distinguishes sharply between the individuality of the subject expressed in a portrait and a more general approach concentrating on a "type". In "The Poetry of Michelangelo" Pater explains how art can be adjusted to "general culture" in the sense of contemporary culture, as he has stipulated in his review:

The qualities of the great masters in art or literature, the combination of those qualities, the laws by which they moderate, support, relieve each other, are not peculiar to them; but most often typical standards, revealing instances of the laws by which certain aesthetic effects are produced. The old masters indeed are simpler; their characteristics are written larger, and are easier to read, than their analogues in all the mixed confused productions of the modern mind. But when once one has succeeded in defining for oneself those characteristics and the law of their combination, one has acquired a standard or measure which helps us to put in its right place many a vagrant genius, many an unclassified talent, many precious though imperfect products. It is so with the components of the true character of Michelangelo. That strange interfusion of sweetness and strength is not to be found in those who claimed to be his followers; but it is found in many of those who worked before him, and in many others down to our own time, in William Blake, for instance, and Victor Hugo, who, though not of his school, and unaware, are his true sons, and help us to understand him, as he in turn interprets and justifies them. Perhaps this is the chief use in studying old masters. (SHR, pp. 88-9)

Through a distillation of the "type" in genius, the nineteenth century can learn to understand Michelangelo, and through him, understand his part in their own culture. Pater wants to define the typical, and he contrasts this with the confusion and complexity of his own age. So this typicality resembles, but is not identical with, the "permanence" of Greek art noted in "Winckelmann"; Pater wants to express the incipient Romanticism of Michelangelo through a basically Hellenistic technique. Goethe, of course, produced the art of the nineteenth century from a fruitful combination of the two strains.

The contradiction between post-Romantic individuality and Hellenistic impersonality in this formulation, forced upon Pater by his own statements in "Winckelmann" and the "Conclusion", is evident in his description of Sir Joshua Reynolds's portraits. He says that the individuality of the artist is suppressed in favour of the personality of the sitter. In "Sandro Botticelli" Pater explains the distinction between studying genius and studying "second-rate" artists.³⁸ Some artists are not susceptible to typification, but even they have a contribution to make to "general culture".

But after all, it may be asked, is a painter like Botticelli, a second-rate painter, a proper subject for general criticism? There are a few great painters, like Michelangelo or Lionardo [*sic*], whose work has become a force in general culture, partly for this very reason that they have absorbed into themselves all such workmen as Sandro Botticelli; and, over and above mere technical or antiquarian criticism, general criticism may be very well employed in that sort of interpretation which adjusts the position of these men to general culture, whereas smaller men can be the proper subjects only of technical or antiquarian treatment. But, besides those great men, there is a certain number of artists who have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere, and these, too, have their place in general culture, and have to be interpreted to it by those who have felt their charm strongly, and are often the objects of a special diligence and a consideration wholly affectionate, just because there is not about them the stress of a great name and authority. (pp. 50-1)

Pater emphasizes again the need to relate artists to "general culture"; but only genius rises above its age sufficiently to be typified. It is significant that he despises antiquarianism, which he always describes as "mere". Secondary artists must therefore also display a timeless quality. In both essays where he condemns antiquarianism explicitly, he stresses individuality as a criterion. In "Luca della Robbia" he says that the artist's work bears

³⁸ It is perhaps significant that Pater revised this phrase and in later editions refers to "secondary" artists.

the impress of a personal quality, a profound expressiveness, what the French call intimité, by which is meant some subtler sense of originality, the seal on a man's work of what is most inward and peculiar in his moods and manner of apprehension: it is what we call expression carried to its highest intensity of degree. That characteristic is rare in poetry, rarer still in art, rarest of all in the abstract art of sculpture; yet at bottom perhaps it is the characteristic which alone makes works in the imaginative and moral order really worth having at all (pp. 60-1)

This emphasis on individuality stems from Romanticism, and is one of the features of contemporary literature which Pater stresses in other essays and books.³⁹ It is a long way from the features of Greek art which he praises in "Winckelmann": individuality is "rarest of all in the abstract art of sculpture". It is repeated in "Joachim du Bellay":

That he is thus a characteristic specimen of the poetical taste of that age, is indeed Du Bellay's chief interest. But if his work is to have the highest sort of interest, if it is to do something more than satisfy curiosity, if it is to have an aesthetic as distinct from an historic value, it is not enough for a poet to have been the true child of his age, to have conformed to its aesthetic conditions, and by so conforming, to have charmed and stimulated that age; it is necessary that there should be perceptible in his work something individual, inventive, unique, the impress there of the writer's own temper and personality. (p. 141)

iv "Leonardo da Vinci"

"Leonardo da Vinci" is the central essay of The Renaissance.⁴⁰ Leonardo is a forerunner of Romanticism in the book, thereby having much to tell the nineteenth century about a part of its culture. In his presentation of Leonardo, Pater uses the Hellenistic method of containment. Pater's ironic statement in the "Conclusion", that "the modern world is in

³⁹ See for example the "Postscript" of Appreciations.

⁴⁰ Pater spelt "Leonardo" idiosyncratically in the first edition of The Renaissance, but altered it to the usual spelling in subsequent editions. I have chosen to adopt the received spelling throughout as the name recurs many times.

possession of truths", is disproved when Pater rejects data and historical research at the beginning of "Leonardo". The clear outline of Leonardo has been lost in a mountain of data. Pater implies the irrelevance of such research and refers almost entirely to the superseded Vasari as his source.⁴¹

The conflict between science and art in the nineteenth century which Pater writes of in "Poems by William Morris" is resolved in the figure of Leonardo. He delves into nature "scientifically", for "the science of that age was all divination, clairvoyance, unsubjected to our exact modern formulas, seeking in an instant of vision to concentrate a thousand experiences" (p. 99, my emphasis). He seeks a unity. Pater contrasts Leonardo's use of science with that of Goethe,

who, in the Elective Affinities and the first part of 'Faust' does transmute ideas into images, who wrought many such transmutations, [but] did not invariably find the spell-word, and in the second part of 'Faust' presents us with a mass of science which has no artistic character at all. (pp. 106-7)

Leonardo, on the other hand, strives to create a symbol from his penetration instead of creating fragmentation. He uses philosophy, that constricting system of the "Conclusion", as "something giving strange swiftness and double sight, divining the sources of springs beneath the earth or of expression beneath the human countenance" (p. 100). Philosophy makes connections for him, therefore, in a stimulating way. His paintings of nature may be composed in "a peculiar atmosphere and mixed lights" (p. 103), but they are not products of the imprisoned and feverish imagination which dominated medieval painting. On the contrary,

⁴¹ Pater takes from Vasari, for example, the description of Leonardo's childhood, his improvement on Verrocchio, and the incorrect attribution to Leonardo of the Medusa.

It is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of places far withdrawn, and hours selected from a thousand with a miracle of finesse. Through his strange veil of sight things reach him so; in no ordinary night or day, but as in faint light of eclipse, or in some brief interval of falling rain at daybreak, or through deep water. (p. 104)

Pater is anxious to convey the naturalness of Leonardo's images as well as their bizarrerie. This is important when he turns to Leonardo's portraits. Leonardo's supreme achievement, according to Pater, is that he paints portraits with "faces of a modelling more skilful than has been seen before or since, embodied with a reality which almost amounts to illusion on dark air" (p. 104). At the same time he encompasses in those portraits the understanding of the deeper recesses of the mind which he has achieved through his delving. He combines a true representation (such as might be found in Greek statues) with the expression of inner truth, or individuality. Thus, in his portraits,

one becomes aware of the subtler forces of nature, and the modes of their action, all that is magnetic in it, all those finer conditions wherein material things rise to that subtlety of operation which constitutes them spiritual, where only the finer nerve and the keener touch can follow; it is as if in certain revealing instances we actually saw them at their work on human flesh. (p. 109)

From this fidelity to the subject of the portrait and to the facts of spiritual nature, Leonardo creates a symbol which means far more. Pater says, "His problem was the transmutation of ideas into images" (P. 105). The passage on the Mona Lisa is the triumphant climax of the essay and the central panel of The Renaissance because to Pater it demonstrates Leonardo's success in being faithful to the subject, portraying the inner recesses of the mind, and at the same time symbolizing a wider humanity, "that larger vision of the opening world" (p. 105). Mona Lisa is "the seventh heaven of symbolical expression" (p. 116). She stands at the point where the old and the modern worlds meet:

The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand

experiences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea. (p. 119)

The artifact as both containing "ten thousand experiences" and expressive of "all manners of thought and life": Leonardo's achievement becomes Pater's ideal in his own work. Leonardo's type of beauty "seems more than that of any other artist to reflect ideas and views and some scheme of the world within": this is the individuality which constantly presses for recognition in The Renaissance. His mastery of symbolism makes a type out of individuality, and this makes Michelet and others consider him "to have anticipated modern ideas" (p. 91).

v The Type and the Hero

The Renaissance discusses historical figures, and ventures into the field of art criticism in its comments on the art of Luca della Robbia, Botticelli, Michelangelo and Leonardo.⁴² Pater's treatment of the artists, and his method of creating similar symbols from the figures in their paintings--Botticelli's Madonnas and Venus, Leonardo's Mona Lisa, for instance--have diverse origins. His technique of writing stems partly from art criticism and partly from the regard for the "Hero" obtaining in Victorian England.⁴³

Sir Joshua Reynolds delivered his Discourses on Art at the Royal Academy between 1769 and 1790. They are present in the "palimpsest" of

⁴² I omit "The School of Giorgione" because I am dealing here with what appeared in the first edition of The Renaissance, and because its content suggests a considerably later date of composition than the other essays.

⁴³ See Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1957), pp. 305-40.

The Renaissance through the medium of William Blake's commentary on them (his "Annotations" to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses, circa 1808), which is quoted in the "Preface": "'The ages are all equal', says William Blake, 'but genius is always above its age'."⁴⁴ Blake's "Annotations" are an impassioned harangue against Reynolds, scornful and exasperated. In the relationships between the ideas of Blake and Reynolds, and between them and Pater's theories, we see Pater's methods of borrowing and cohering in action. Reynolds emphasized the superiority of the "grand style" in painting, and exhorted his students to search for an ideal beauty:

All the objects which are exhibited to our view by nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects. The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection. But it is not every eye that perceives these blemishes. It must be an eye long used to the contemplation and comparison of these forms; and which, by a long habit of observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common, has acquired the power of discerning what each wants in particular. This long laborious comparison should be the first study of the painter who aims at the greatest style. By this means, he acquires a just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original. ⁴⁵

This Platonic theory of ideal beauty is anathema to Blake, who annotates this passage, and the sentences immediately preceding it, with "A Lie!", "A Folly!" and the opinion, "Minuteness is their whole Beauty" (p. 459).

⁴⁴ op. cit., p.x. In fact, it is relevant to the discussion in Chapter I that Pater misquotes Blake as well as omitting a full reference. Blake actually wrote: "Ages are all Equal. But Genius is Always Above The Age". The connection of Blake with Reynolds is explicit in "Children in Italian and English Design", where Pater contrasts Reynolds with the independence of Blake's pictures, saying that Blake's work is "full of that peculiar mingling of sweetness and strangeness which characterise the work of this great artist" (p. 267).

⁴⁵ Fifteen Discourses delivered in the Royal Academy (London: Dent, n.d.), p. 30. Subsequent page references will be included in the text.

In Plato and Platonism Pater also rejects it as reducing all concrete and sensuous things to "the dry and worthless seed" (p. 141). Reynolds recommends frequent study of ancient sculpture, commenting that of the Hercules, the Gladiator and the Apollo,

none of them is the representation of an individual, but of a class. And as there is one general form, which, as I have said, belongs to the human kind at large, so in each of these classes there is one common idea and central form, which is the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to that class. (p. 33)

Blake's reply to this compulsive generalization is "What is General Nature? is there such a Thing? what is General Knowledge? is there such a Thing? Strictly Speaking All Knowledge is Particular". And, "Every Class is Individual" (pp. 459-60). Pater weaves his way between these opposing views. Reynolds's preference for "a simplicity, and, I may add, severity, in the great manner" (p. 47) over colour, sensuousness and the artist's personal style leads him to praise impersonality and lack of individuality in the subjects of paintings, and more especially, sculpture:

The face bears so very inconsiderable a proportion to the effect of the whole figure, that the ancient sculptors neglected to animate the features, even with the general expression of the passions. Of this the group of the Boxers is a remarkable instance; they are engaged in the most animated action with the greatest serenity of countenance. (pp. 162-3)

Reynolds therefore considers portraiture an inferior branch of painting, for it descends to the particular; the portrait-painter is consequently a "defective model" (p. 55) for aspiring artists. Reynolds continues,

if a portrait-painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea. He leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and changes the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent, which has annexed to it no ideas of meanness from its being familiar to us. But if an exact resemblance of an individual be considered as the sole object to be aimed at, the portrait-painter will be apt to lose more than he gains by the acquired dignity taken from general nature. (p. 57)

Blake's impatient response to this is "Folly! Of what consequence is it

to the Arts what a Portrait Painter does?" (p. 465)

Pater's use of the geniuses of the Renaissance is indebted to Reynolds, for Reynolds advocates the imitation of a number of past geniuses by the aspiring artist. Pater converts the genius who, in Blake's term "is always above its own age", and in his own words, "refuses to be classified", into a "type" available for instructing the modern age, an ideal like Reynolds's recommended ideal of beauty. From the explanation of the correct way of imitation in the Sixth Discourse, Pater uses his own past heritage of writers.⁴⁶ Blake's concern for individuality and particularity is connected with his unconcern for a qualitative hierarchy of art based on a secular definition of "inspiration" or originality; he feels that all inspiration is divine:

Reynolds's Opinion was that Genius May be Taught & that all Pretence to Inspiration is a Lie & a Deceit, to say the least of it. For if it is a Deceit, the whole Bible is Madness. This Opinion originates in the Greeks' Calling the Muses Daughters of Memory. (p. 452)

Divine inspiration becomes, for the Romantic artist like Blake, innate ideas of ideal beauty which cannot be attained by imitation or study:

Knowledge of Ideal Beauty is Not to be Acquired. It is Born with us. Innate Ideas are in Every Man, Born with him; they are truly Himself. The Man who says that we have No Innate Ideas must be a Fool & Knave, Having No Con-Science or Innate Science. (p. 459)

Pater moves towards an appreciation of Romanticism throughout The Renaissance. Leonardo's portraits are to be admired because they express

⁴⁶ In the Sixth Discourse Reynolds suggests that inspiration is not divine; significantly for Pater, he implies that the later the artist, the more circumscribed the area for the new artist's originality: when it was found that every man could be taught to do this, and a great deal more, merely by the observance of certain precepts; the name of genius then shifted its application, and was given only to him who added the peculiar character of the object he represented; to him who had invention, expression, grace, or dignity; in short, those qualities, or excellences, the power of producing which could not then be taught by any known and promulgated rules. (p. 79) However, to Reynolds, this recognition of past geniuses does not constitute a burden, as it did to Pater's generation.

the inner movements of the mind: a criterion to which Reynolds's thought is diametrically opposed. Yet Pater is evidently in sympathy with the stricter Hellenism represented by Reynolds and Winckelmann, who are part of "the long, conscientious neoclassic revaluation of itself, its reweighing of itself in the balance against the 'classical', and its growing repudiation of part of what it had done".⁴⁷ Blake's theory of inspiration does not allow the possibility of fruitful imitation, a principle which rules Pater's own writing.

In his Fifth Discourse Reynolds expresses some reservations about his own qualitative judgements. He fears he has been misunderstood in previous Discourses. He continues to stress that "nothing has its proper lustre but in its proper place" (p. 59)--which Blake grudgingly agrees to: "Concessions to Truth for the sake of Oversetting Truth" (p. 465)--and he rejects the ability of the artist to "execute the conceptions of a romantic imagination" (p. 61). However, he concedes that a lesser category of painting may have merit, because it "shows that those who cultivated it were men of lively and vigorous imagination" (p. 68). This style he calls the "original or characteristical style", and it is so because the artist expresses his own vision consistently, and with "union and harmony". In this lesser category we can foresee Pater's favour for "intimité" or "expression" in secondary painters, and also his emphasis on the controlling artifact which will unite disparate elements in a cohesive whole; in Reynolds's words on Salvator Rosa,

what is most to be admired in him is the perfect correspondence which he observed between the subjects which he chose and his manner of treating them. Everything is of a piece: his rocks, trees, sky, even

⁴⁷ W Jackson Bate, The Burden of the Past and the English Poet (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), pp. 117-8.

to his handling, have the same rude and wild character which animates his figures. (p. 69)

In fact, Reynolds was delivering these Discourses in the twenty years after Winckelmann's death, and already the incipient strains of Romanticism were emerging. Walter Houghton describes the heritage of the Victorian conception of the Hero as being the Hellenic revival of the late eighteenth century and a new strain of the wild and primitive, drawn from a new interest in the ballad.⁴⁸ We see in Reynolds, then, a Hellenist who betrays the first signs of the winds of cultural change, but who retains classicist ideals of imitation and study. Blake, on the other hand, may hold the opinion of divine inspiration, which Pater cannot accept, but he scorns a secular qualitative judgement.

Both Ruskin and Arnold adopted Reynolds's ideal of the "grand style".⁴⁹ For them both, however, it was a means of making hierarchical value judgements. In the "Preface" Pater explicitly denounces this in favour of relativism. Yet he adopts the emphasis on the Hero, or the "type", for his literary technique, that for Arnold has such moral implications. Matthew Arnold delivered his lectures "On Translating Homer" when he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, in the years from 1861 to 1863. Significantly, these were the years when Pater was an undergraduate at Queen's College, Oxford. His criticisms of Francis Newman, the most recent, and to Arnold, the most awful of Homer's translators, stem from his dislike of the democratic eclecticism and lack of proportion which

⁴⁸ op. cit., p. 307.

⁴⁹ Ruskin in "Touching the 'Grand Style'", Modern Painters III (1856), Part 4, Chapter 1; Arnold in "On Translating Homer" (1860-1).

Newman represented.⁵⁰ Carlyle's praise of the Hero, in On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History (1841), is equally directed against developing democracy and the growing theory of the predominance of contemporary conditions; he presents the Hero as an antidote, as an embodiment of the dynamic power of the human will. In this "icon" of the Hero, the contrasting strains of Reynolds's and Arnold's Hellenism, and Blake's and Carlyle's Romantic fervour for the individual genius combine, with therapeutic effects for Pater's writing. Carlyle's praise of Goethe in particular is echoed in Pater's apotheosis of Goethe in The Renaissance, where he is upheld as the "complete" man whom nineteenth-century men should emulate in culture.

Arnold's preference for objective poetry developed because of his own struggle with introspection and despair. He withdrew his volumes of poetry published in 1849 and 1852, which contain most of his introspective works; as Walter Houghton says,

To the intellectual, submerged and baffled by the sterile analysis of modern problems and doubts, feeling by moments so lacking in blood, so emasculated, the heroic life was a vitalizing image.⁵¹

The Victorian fondness for the Hero was therefore compounded of an emotional need and a desire for didactic inspiration. Similarly, Pater's fear of the dissolution of the psyche in an isolated subjectivity is rectified by the containment of the "type", while his equally strong feelings about individuality can be expressed in a coherent form through it.

⁵⁰ Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold (London: Allen and Unwin, 1939), pp. 170-3.

⁵¹ op. cit., p. 334.

vi Biography

Like many of the other essays in The Renaissance, "Leonardo da Vinci" spans the life of Leonardo, beginning with his childhood and ending with his death. Pater uses the details of his life which Vasari provides, to trace the themes of his paintings.

Throughout The Renaissance art is praised for capturing the moment forever. In "The Poetry of Michelangelo", for example, this captured moment is envisaged in conjunction with death. Discussing Michelangelo's tombs of the Medici in the sacristy of San Lorenzo, Pater points out the uncertain speculation upon death that they embody:

dumb enquiry, the relapse after death into the formlessness which preceded life, change, revolt from that change, then the correcting, hallowing, consoling rush of pity; at last, far off, thin and vague, yet not more vague than the most definite thoughts men have had through three centuries on a matter that has been so near their hearts --the new body; a passing light, a mere intangible, external effect over those too rigid or too formless faces; a dream that lingers a moment, retreating in the dawn, incomplete, aimless, helpless; a thing with faint hearing, faint memory, faint power of touch; a breath, a flame in the doorway, a feather in the wind. (pp. 87-8)

The loose structure of this stunning sentence, where each phrase triggers a refinement or reservation or adjustment, conveys precisely the effect of fleeting impressions. The language echoes this, with its numerous present participles and adjectives of diminishment and negative presence. The sentence appears to lead up to the positive climax of "the new body" or immortality, a consolation perhaps after the inadequate "dumb enquiry" and "rush of pity"; yet as soon as it is introduced, it becomes evanescent and intangible. The last three phrases detract from the security of the idea of immortality and at the same time bring the whole passage round to the thematic imagery that runs through The Renaissance: the dream, the dawn, the flame.

This moment has the power of drawing together time past, present and

future into one complex yet fused unity. Although such "epiphanies" occur as images of life also, as at the end of "Joachim du Bellay", Pater's use of death as the emotional crux of such a moment is connected with his use of biography.⁵² In The Sense of an Ending Frank Kermode talks of man's need to impose meaning on life:

whether you believe the age of the world to be six thousand years or five thousand million years, whether you think time will have a stop or that the world is eternal; there is still a need to speak humanly of a life's importance in relation to it--a need in the moment of existence to belong, to be related to a beginning and to an end. ⁵³

Between the beginning and the end we seek

an instance of what [the psychologists] call 'temporal integration' --our way of bundling together perception of the present, memory of the past, and expectation of the future, in a common organization. (p. 46)

But it is a consciousness of an end which endows the interim with meaning, and when men cannot believe in a divine ending any more (as Pater describes in "The Poetry of Michelangelo"), the end becomes immanent, re-enacted in every man's death. Pater therefore draws power from the topic of death as an ending and as a moment which endows meaning on the life which has gone before that death. The biography of a genius, or "type", gives him the rhythms of humanity, beginning with birth and childhood, and ending with death. Leonardo and the other artists in The Renaissance remain individuals therefore, at the same time as they

⁵² This is perhaps the most quoted instance:
A sudden light transfigures a trivial thing, a weather-vane, a wind-mill, a winnowing flail, the dust in the barn door: a moment--and the thing has vanished, because it was pure effect; but it leaves a relish behind it, a longing that the accident may happen again. (p. 145)

⁵³ The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction (New York: OUP, 1967), pp. 3-4. Subsequent page references will be included in the text.

become representative of wider themes. The elementary framework of birth and death also gives Pater's essays a naturally cohesive form. Death affords a culminating symbolism, encapsulating the genius in a formula which Pater is always eager to use. For example, Pico della Mirandola represents the merging of Hellenism with the Middle Ages at the moment of his death. It is a moment when time past, present and future is drawn together.

According to Kermode, it is the consciousness of an "End" which changes all, and produces, in what in relation to it is the past, these seasons, kairoi, historical moments of intemporal significance. The divine plot is the pattern of kairoi in relation to the End.
(p. 47)

Instead of a divine ending, though, Pater makes the end the fact of death. In the "Conclusion" he envisages the whole of life as being the period before death: "Well, we are all condamnés, as Victor Hugo says: les hommes sont tous condamnés à mort avec des sursis indéfinis" (p. 212). In the third edition of The Renaissance he translates Hugo's words: "We are all under sentence of death but with a sort of indefinite reprieve".⁵⁴ It is significant that he translates "condamnés" with "under sentence of death". This strengthens the original sense until humanity appears to be constantly burdened and overshadowed by impending death, so that the whole life is darkened by it. "Our one chance lies in expanding that interval" he says--in creating kairoi in relation to the end of death, in Kermode's terminology--and Pater's interest in the lives of his chosen artists, in how they filled their intervals and reacted to the proximity of death, determines his fondness for biography. So keen is he to present an artistic "life" that in "Sandro Botticelli" he says

⁵⁴ The Renaissance, p. 251.

it seems strange that he should have lived on inactive so long; and one almost wishes that some document might come to light which, fixing the date of his death earlier, might relieve one, in thinking of him, of his dejected old age. (pp. 40-1)

In "The Poetry of Michelangelo" he uses the extreme length of Michelangelo's life to express his imaginative sense of Michelangelo as a symbol:

Some of those whom the gods love die young. This man, because the gods loved him, lingered on to be of immense patriarchal age, till the sweetness it had taken so long to secrete in him was found at last. Out of the strong came forth sweetness, ex forti dulcedo. The world had changed around him. (p. 80)

Just as the world had changed, so had Michelangelo. Pater uses the long life and late death to suggest the slow but discernible change at the end of the Italian Renaissance.

Many nineteenth-century biographers, in fact, used the death scene as a symbolic comment or rendering of their interpretation.⁵⁵ And the death scene is, of course, a favourite opportunity for protracted treatment in the nineteenth-century novel. Yet when it is adopted by biographers it has implications for religion and the nature of reality and fiction. As Cockshut says,

The nineteenth-century biographer, whether Christian or not, inherited and seldom questioned an assumption that these forces could not be summed up simply in physical law and social pressure. There is, almost always, a further idea present, sometimes overtly expressed, sometimes vaguely adumbrated, of spiritual formation by forces beyond man's control, and indeed beyond his full understanding. Each life is felt to have a meaning, an objective meaning to which all interpretation is only a weak approximation. . . . It is possible to read a good biography as if it were a novel, paying attention to the author's mastery of form. But in the nineteenth century, another process was more common. The biographer himself reads the evidence of the life as if it were a novel, and God were the novelist. (p. 21)

Nineteenth-century biographers, then, regarded life as a kind of novel because of spiritual, sometimes religious, security, and were able to use

⁵⁵ See A.O.J. Cockshut, Truth to Life: The art of Biography in the Nineteenth Century (London: Collins, 1974).

the death scene in their biographies as a novelistic ending. Death provides the organic end to the life and the prelude to the new, everlasting life. Even in the case where agnosticism prevails, either on the part of the subject (for example, Cross's Life of George Eliot) or on the part of the biographer as well (G. H. Lewes's Goethe), some idea of continuity, through the immortality of the subject's art or his influence on the still-living, is usually suggested.

Pater uses death in its convenience as a novelistic ending, but does not allow it to create a security. It retrospectively endows meaning on life, and by its presence creates meaning before it; but he never allows it to imply immortality. In "Leonardo da Vinci" Pater uses Leonardo's death as the occasion to follow through and echo his formula for Leonardo:

We forget them in speculating how one who had been always so desirous of beauty, but desired it always in such precise and definite forms, as hands or flowers or hair, looked forward now into the vague land, and experienced the last curiosity. (p. 122)

This, the closing sentence of the essay, projects Pater's own curiosity into Leonardo's experience of death. It gives a fitting end to the essay, for the words are tentative and unsure, questioning as Leonardo had questioned throughout his life. The idea of immortality is questioned, not to be replaced by pessimism or ambiguity, but by a startlingly open and penetrative vision, whose tone pervades The Renaissance. The "land" beyond death is "vague" and lacking in "precise and definite forms" for Pater, just as the similar "new body" is in "The Poetry of Michelangelo".

Kermode detects that when an Apocalyptic end (i.e., a secure Biblical ending) is deferred, man's sense of an ending changes from its imminence to its immanence; time becomes a vast continuum. But the sense of indeterminacy must not be lost:

In our perpetual crisis we have, at the proper seasons, under the pressure perhaps of our own end, dizzying perspectives upon the past

and the future, in a freedom which is the freedom of a discordant reality. Such a vision of chaos or absurdity may be more than we can easily bear. . . . Merely to give order to these perspectives is to provide consolation, as De Quincey's opium did; and simple fictions are the opium of the people. But fictions too easy we call 'escapist'; we want them not only to console but to make discoveries of the hard truth here and now, in the midst. (p. 179)

Pater's use of death fulfils both requirements: it is an ending to a man's life and affords symbolic containment, but it is not a final end nor an entrance to a future life to one who questions the religious certainty of immortality.

Pater's unsureness about beginnings and about endings, as in death, is expressed through the containing form of biography. Death provides Pater with a kind of "open teleology", to coin a term, in his essays. It is an ending replete with symbolical overtones which Pater is swift to utilize in novelistic ways. It gives an organic containment to his observations. But it remains open because of his own explicit questioning of quite what it is.

Pater's interest in biography is well documented from reading lists which still exist in several Oxford libraries.⁵⁶ He used biographies as source material for his essays. His fondness for Sainte-Beuve throughout The Renaissance is closely connected with Sainte-Beuve's biographical approach to criticism.⁵⁷ He was also interested in the form itself. The Dictionary of National Biography appeared quarterly from 1886 to 1900.

⁵⁶ For example, we learn that in 1866, Pater borrowed Sainte-Beuve's Portraits Contemporains et divers from the Taylor Institute; in 1868, Volumes 19-20, 11-12 and 45-46 of the Nouvelle Biographie Générale from Brasenose College; in 1869, Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson from Brasenose College and Sainte-Beuve again from the Taylor Institute; in 1870, Rémusat's biography of Abelard and Volumes 41-42 of the Nouvelle Biographie Générale from Brasenose College; in 1871, Volumes 39-40 of the same, a life of Pico and More's biography of Pico from the Bodleian.

⁵⁷ Gerald Monsman, Pater's Portraits: Mythic Pattern in the Fiction of Walter Pater (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 37.

Both A.C. Benson and Thomas Wright attest to Pater's enthusiasm for it.⁵⁸ From 1882 to 1889 Leslie Stephen was the editor. It is noteworthy that one of Stephen's justifications for the DNB in 1898 was its revelation of the individuals who were the precursors of their distilled types in literature:

to the mere literary reader, the ideal of a sailor is represented by such books as Southey's Life of Nelson; or still more vividly perhaps by the novels of Captain Marryat or Smollett, or by Kingsley's Westward Ho! or possibly Miss Austen's Persuasion. We are all supposed to know something of the great admirals, upon whom R.L. Stevenson wrote a charming article. But anyone who is attracted by the type, would do well to turn over the dictionary and look up the long list of minor heroes, who stood for their portraits to Marryat and his fellows; . . . the Trunnions and Amyas Leighs and Peter Simples of real life, who certainly are to the full as interesting as their imaginary representatives. 59

This reversion from imaginative portrayal to fact then stimulates for Stephen a philosophical generalization:

But this I may say; that I have received innumerable suggestions for thought, and had many vignettes presented to my imagination, which to a man of any thought or imagination should have been full of interest. . . . I think that no one can ramble through this long gallery without storing up a number of vivid images of the lesser luminaries, which will have the same effect upon his conceptions of history as a really good set of illustrations upon a narrative of travels. (pp. 35-6)

Here lingers Carlyle's theory that history comprises the deeds of (great) men.

In the nineteenth century there was a vast proliferation of biographies.⁶⁰ Many of them were written to commemorate their subjects after death, and were notoriously evasive about personal details: they had a largely hagiographical function. However, despite this "persistent

⁵⁸ Benson, p. 19; Wright, p. 117.

⁵⁹ "National Biography", Studies of a Biographer, Vol. I (London: Duckworth, 1898), p. 28.

⁶⁰ See Alan Shelston, Biography (London: Methuen, 1977), p. 4.

attempt to establish heroism",⁶¹ the proliferation owed much to the earlier Romantic emphasis on the importance of individual experience and on the personality. The Romantic interest in the formative experience of the child, however, was difficult to incorporate into biography. While autobiography stems from memory, and therefore can securely evoke childhood, biography, especially in the nineteenth century, used documents as its sources. Few documents ever survive from childhood, and therefore the demand for a rendering of personality clashes with a dependence upon documents. Many biographies of the nineteenth century solve this by using reported childhood experiences as emblems instead of formative influences.⁶² Pater does this with Leonardo when he quotes one of Vasari's anecdotes to illustrate, not to explain, the later themes in Leonardo's paintings. As an inheritor of the Romantic movement he senses the importance of personality and childhood, but cannot enter into it fully because of his adherence to fact. Yet the emblematic technique moves biography towards depicting the "type", with its modelling and conforming effect.

Francis Bacon, who provides the epigraph for "Leonardo da Vinci", divides history into three kinds: "a portion of time, a memorable person,

⁶¹ Cockshut, p. 16.

⁶² Cockshut, p. 20, discusses emblematic view: it does not assert a dubious proposition as if it were a fact. But it does not deny the possibility that a real influence on the future may have been at work. It is an open view; it is poetically suggestive, but (provided that the actual facts are stated correctly) is incapable of being refuted. It preserves the mystery of personality; it preserves the salutary humility of all good biography in the august presence of another soul.

or an illustrious action".⁶³ To him, descriptions of people, or "lives", "excel in advantage and use"; they show the "true and inward springs" of events, unlike chronicles; and,

if wrote with care and judgement, proposing to represent a person, in whom actions, both great and small, public and private, are blended together, must of necessity give a more genuine, native, and lively representation, and such as is fitter for imitation.

Here, biography is considered the most vivid way to represent history and the best exemplum for the reader. Dryden also divides history into three kinds, but finds biography the inferior in dignity, because it must exclude an overall view of events, obtainable only through the actions and experiences of many men.⁶⁴ However, he allows that "in pleasure and instruction it equals, or even excels both of them." This is because of the concentration on one man:

As the sun beams, united in a burning-glass to a point, have greater force than if they were darted from a plain superficies; so the virtues and actions of one man, drawn together into a single story, strike upon our minds a stronger and more lively impression, than the scattered relations of many men, and many actions; and by the same means that they give us pleasure they afford us profit too. For when the understanding is intent and fixed on a single thing, it carries closer to the mark, every part of the object sinks into it, and the soul receives it unmixed and whole.

This image of the sun beams concentrated through a "burning glass" is similar to Pater's point where all things meet, where there is a momentary confluence of past, present and future. Dryden's praise of concentration on one man becomes Pater's use of one man as symbol of the historical moment.

⁶³ De Augmentis Scientiarum (1623), Book II, Chapter 7, translated by Peter Shaw, revised by Joseph Devey; cit. James L. Clifford, ed., Biography as an Art: Selected Criticism 1560-1960 (London: OUP, 1962), pp. 7-8. The epigraph to "Leonardo da Vinci", "Homo Minister et Interpres Naturae", comes from his Novum Organum, First Book of Aphorisms, No. 1.

⁶⁴ "The Life of Plutarch", prefixed to Plutarch's Lives, Translated from the Greek by Several Hands (1683-6), Vol. I; cit. Clifford, pp. 17-19.

Biography can also alleviate the isolation of the individual. In The Renaissance Pater's interest in the personality of the man is not so much to do with the part of the man which separates him from all other men as with the links, the typicality, which cause the subject to represent other men's impulses. The inmost details of the mind are important only insofar as they give him an image or formula with which to generalize about his subject. As Richard Ellmann says,

biography is essentially social. For the biographer, who himself represents the outside world, the social self is the real self, the self only comes to exist when juxtaposed with other people. The solitary self is a pressure upon the social self, or a repercussion of it, but it has no independent life. 65

Pater's anguish over the isolation of the individual is to some extent relieved by his use of biography, his imaginative sympathy, his care for the "type", a kind of social impersonality. Carlyle also sees the sympathetic effect that biography can have for the reader:

Looking with the eyes of every new neighbour, he can discern a new world different for each: feeling with the heart of every neighbour, he lives with every neighbour's life, even as with his own. Of these millions of living men, each individual is a mirror to us; a mirror both scientific and poetic; or, if you will, both natural and magical;--from which one would so gladly draw aside the gauze veil; and, peering therein, discern the image of his own natural face, and the supernatural secrets that prophetically lie under the same! 66

Carlyle is here reviewing Croker's edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson. Pater read this at least twice. Among the manuscripts left at his death was one on Dr Johnson.⁶⁷ In the Life Boswell recommends the quality of

⁶⁵ op. cit., p. 2

⁶⁶ "Biography" (1832), Critical and Miscellaneous Essays Vol. III, Vol. XXVIII of The Works (London: Chapman and Hall, 1899), p. 45.

⁶⁷ Samuel Wright states that the unfinished study of Dr Johnson is unlocated. It is mentioned by May Ottley in her introduction to Walter Pater, "Imaginary Portrait No. 2: An English Poet", Fortnightly Review, N.S. CXXIX (April 1931), 433-48.

immediacy created by the almost verbatim quotation of conversations with Johnson because "mankind are enabled as it were to see him live, and to 'live o'er each scene' with him, as he actually advanced through the several stages of his life."⁶⁸ This focus on the intricacies of a great man's life is important for Pater only insofar as it allows him to divine the meaning of the subject's work, or to understand his "general culture". Conversation, unless in the forms of letters and diaries, is impractical also because of the distance of Pater's subjects in the past. It is too close to a subject whom Pater wishes to depict as a type. However, the conversations in the Life of Johnson also perform the function of showing what Johnson thought about books, contemporaries and literary topics. Pater does use conversation occasionally when he wishes to illuminate the work or the age. This is evident, for instance, in his quotations from Winckelmann's letters, and which he recreates in Marius's diary and Sebastian's Journal. When so many critics deplore Pater's "inability" to create characters and his lack of dialogue or drama, it is useful to remember that they are connected: the emphasis on type in a sense excludes dialogue, for Pater is not interested in the evanescent or totally personal.

Pater's early essays, "Diaphaneité", "Winckelmann" and "Poems by William Morris", contain the seeds of much of his later writing: he portrayed his ideal "type", and in the years that followed, he analysed the Hellenic ideal and the part it could play in modern life which he found to be chaotic, dispersing, undermined by scientific truths. The

⁶⁸ Life of Samuel Johnson (1791), The Globe Edition (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 3.

"type" could contain and express these characteristics, just as it also safely rescued the precarious human psyche from isolation, despair and fragmentation. In The Renaissance Pater treats the geniusses of that age as representatives of their culture and as independent artists who could become emblems for his own age. He adopts the narrative framework of biography in order to give form to his observations and to provide natural beginnings and endings for his essays. However, the respective claims of Romanticism and Hellenism, or diversity and restraint, create tensions in "Winckelmann" in particular. In "Leonardo da Vinci", the central and supreme essay of the book, Pater combines the "type" and individuality successfully, creating the most powerful symbol in his writing, for his own work: the Mona Lisa. It is significant that this essay is the most imaginative in the book.

CHAPTER III

The years between: introspection, autobiography and
the problem of ending

i Truth and Sympathy

In The Renaissance Pater talks about men who really lived and died-- Abelard, Pico della Mirandola, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Joachim du Bellay, Winckelmann--and describes their lives and works. He works closely from published biographies of his subjects. However, the development of "technical criticism" in the nineteenth century causes Pater to adopt a subjective approach: he prefers the legends to the facts, the illuminating image to the unselective recounting of sequential events. There is a problem of incipient falsity. Aesthetic criticism comes to be associated with "imaginative" activity. With the introduction of imagination, we see the first steps towards the portraits which Pater produced in later years. The problem that Pater's imaginative writing poses is its ambiguous position between historical fact and fiction; this may be said to be the tension inherent in biography as a form. The problems of truth, of accuracy and aesthetic values, all arise.

As early as 1662, Thomas Fuller was saying that biography should, among other things, "entertain the reader with delight". Purely chronological relation is boring, he says, so "therefore this bare skeleton of time, place, and person, must be fleshed with some pleasant passages".¹ In comments on the form, this incipient inventiveness is remarked upon time and again. Conyers Middleton quotes extensively from Cicero in his biography of that man, because many biographers, through partiality, "work up their characters as painters do their portraits; taking the praise of their art to consist, not in copying, but in adorning nature; not in drawing a just resemblance, but giving a fine picture; or

¹ The History of the Worthies of England (1662), Chapter I; cit. Clifford, pp. 9-11.

exalting the man into a hero".² Roger North accurately defines the unease as being about the relative statuses of truth in history and fiction.³ The dullness which Thomas Fuller wishes to avoid is here averted by using expressly fictional devices: "the same ingredients that are usually brought to adorn fiction may come forward, and be as well applied to the setting forth of truths; that is choice of words, charming periods, invention of figures, interspersions of sentences, and facetious expressions". North rejects fiction in favour of history:

it seems that fiction however deliciously dressed, hath not those advantages to improve as history hath, for that it is not true is a cooling reflection. And what force can any moral arguments or sentences have that are derived upon feigned events? Nothing can invigorate eloquence like truth. . . . There is great art, as well as felicity, in making a good description of plain facts.

However, biography runs many risks of being inaccurate. For pragmatic reasons, North allows a margin of inaccuracy, seeking instead only the most truthful: "all history of one form or other is like painting, never exactly true; that which comes nearest is best, and however discrepant, there may be some use or other that makes it reasonable, not to slight, but to preserve it." Already then, there were several reasons for reservations about biography: the artistic means of presentation, the dangers of partiality and subjectivity on the part of the biographer, the comparison with painting (which is very significant for Pater's later work), the uncertainty about the definition of truth.

This emphasis on truth takes us back to the use of documents. The difficulty is between "truth of fact and truth of fiction" as Virginia

² Preface to The Life and Letters of Marcus Tullius Cicero (1741); cit. Clifford, pp. 38-9.

³ "General Preface" to "Life of the Lord Keeper North"; cit. Clifford, pp. 27-37.

Woolf says.⁴ Pater's subjectivity and preference for legend over facts compounds this confusion. His compulsive misquotation is an indication of a different conception of truth. And this concern with truth is closely connected with the nineteenth-century interest in Plato. It is no accident that Pater wrote a book on Plato, nor that he considered it his best book.⁵

In the "Preface" Pater talks about knowing "one's own impression"; in "Sandro Botticelli" he seeks to define "the peculiar sensation"; by the time "The School of Giorgione" was published in 1877, he was able to formulate his thoughts more precisely:

as art addresses not pure sense, still less the pure intellect, but the 'imaginative reason' through the senses, there are differences of kind in aesthetic beauty, corresponding to the differences in kind of the gifts of sense themselves. Each art, therefore, having its own peculiar and incommunicable sensuous charm, has its own special mode of reaching the imagination, its own special responsibilities to its material. 6

The appeal to the imagination releases the critic's response, and in Pater's case, as he says in "Leonardo da Vinci", the artist's life often supports his impression of the art.⁷ Thus in "The School of Giorgione",

⁴ "The New Biography" (1927), Collected Essays, Vol. IV (London: Hogarth, 1967), p. 234.

⁵ See Benson, p. 162:

He placed the book at the head of his own writings. A friend once asked him whether he thought that The Renaissance or Marius was his best book. 'Oh, no,' he said, 'neither. If there is anything of mine that has a chance of surviving, I should say it was my Plato.'

⁶ The Renaissance, pp. 135-6, my emphasis. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by Ren.

⁷ . . . a lover of strange souls may still analyse for himself the impression made on him by those works, and try to reach through it a definition of the chief elements of Lionardo's genius. The legend, corrected and enlarged by its critics, may now and then intervene to support the results of his analysis. (SHR, p. 92).

"Giorgione . . . [becomes] a sort of impersonation of Venice itself, its projected reflex or ideal, all that was intense or desirable in it thus crystallising about the memory of this wonderful young man" (Ren, p. 154). In "Pico della Mirandola",

It is because of the life of Pico, thus lying down to rest in the Dominican habit, yet amid thoughts of the older gods, himself like one of those comely divinities, reconciled indeed to the new religion, but still with a tenderness for the earlier life, and desirous literally to 'bind the ages each to each by natural piety' --it is because this life is so perfect an analogue to the attempt made in his writings to reconcile Christianity with the ideas of Paganism, that Pico, in spite of the scholastic character of those writings, is really interesting. ⁸

Here the symbolic appeal of Pico's endeavour and "legend" overcomes the solely antiquarian interest we can expect to take in his writings. Pater analyses the differing concepts of truth in three central chapters of Plato and Platonism, "Plato and Socrates", "Plato and Sophists", and "The Genius of Plato". After discussing Socrates's maieutic method of discovering the "truth", and the equally Platonic emphasis on accurate apprehension of the truth, as contrasted with the Sophists' "superficial" rendering, he reaches what he calls the "formula" of the genius of Plato. This succinct yet cohesive definition has become precisely what he defines in "The School of Giorgione":

The lover, who is become a lover of the invisible, but still a lover, and therefore, literally, a seer, of it, carrying an elaborate cultivation of the bodily senses, of eye and ear, their natural force and acquired fineness . . . into the world of intellectual abstractions; seeing and hearing there too, associating for ever all the imagery of things seen with the conditions of what primarily exists only for the mind, filling that 'hollow land' with delightful colour and form, as if now at last the mind were veritably dealing with living people there, living people who play upon us through the

⁸ SHR, p. 33. Pater spelt "Mirandola", "Mirandula" in the first edition of The Renaissance, but altered it to the usual spelling in subsequent editions. I have chosen to adopt the received spelling throughout as the name recurs many times.

affinities, the repulsion and attraction, of persons towards one another, all the magnetism, as we call it, of actual human friendship or love:--There, is the formula of Plato's genius, . . . He breaks as it were visible colour into the very texture of his work: his vocabulary, the very stuff he manipulates, has its delightful aesthetic qualities; almost every word, one might say, its figurative value. And yet no one perhaps has with equal power literally sounded the unseen depths of thought, and, with what may be truly called 'substantial' word and phrase, given locality there to the mere adumbrations, the dim hints and surmise, of the speculative mind. For him, all gifts of sense and intelligence converge in one supreme faculty of theoretic vision . . . the imaginative reason. (pp. 126-7)

The ideal, therefore, is to embody abstractions in a sensuous form, yet to reflect them and not to constrict them. The "imagination" is the transforming agent.⁹ William H. Sullivan states that Pater's criticism and fiction "do not represent a failure in generic distinction, but a success in symbolic method".¹⁰ He adds that "it is a given of Pater's aesthetic that all modern art is biographical". But he assigns a central position to Pater's subjectivity, and claims that this is the root of Pater's prescription for modern art. Pater is subjective in his analysis of modern life in the "Conclusion", but his subsequent theories are not founded upon a straightforwardly subjective critical response, contrary to popular critical opinion. His emphasis on imagination is rather directed towards a Platonic voyage of discovery of truth.

To Carlyle the importance of truth is its binding, sympathetic power, a truth which is vastly superior to fiction because it comforts the reader:

let any one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical fact may become, as contrasted with the grandest fictitious event; what an incalculable force lies for us in this consideration: The Thing which I here hold imaged in my mind did actually occur; was, in very

⁹ The connection of the imagination with first of all the "bodily senses, of eye and ear", and secondly with "theoretic vision" is an important complex of similar, but not identical terms, which Pater explores in later years.

¹⁰ op. cit., p. 1.

truth, an element in the system of the All, whereof I too form part; had therefore, and has, through all time, an authentic being; is not a dream, but a reality! 11

Yet despite this distinction, even Carlyle uses a fictional framework for his spiritual autobiography Sartor Resartus. This sympathetic effect of truth is stressed again and again in Victorian writing. Dickens's satirical contrast of "Facts" with the imaginative life of the circus people in Hard Times is only the most explicit comment on a conflict which exercised most writers and intellectuals.¹² For Pater, the imaginative apprehension of truth, creating sensuous embodiments of abstract concepts, is akin to art, and peoples the world with a community of feeling which alleviates isolation. In The Renaissance he does this through historical figures; but this was still too bound to facts and documents, however much he subverted his sources and forerunners. To attain true sympathy, yet at the same time to retain the controlling plastic form of type and biography, he had paradoxically to move to a more subjective perspective, while retaining a communal breadth of experience. In the years that followed the publication of the first edition of The Renaissance, he explored this. It carries his work into the realm of what may be called "creative" writing, but because of the reasoning behind Pater's explorations, his writing always retains the characteristic scholarly traits discussed in Chapter I.

Five publications of the years from 1874 to 1885 stand together: "On Wordsworth", "The Child in the House", "Charles Lamb", the unfinished

¹¹ "Biography", p. 54.

¹² See David J. DeLaura, "Arnold's Imaginative Reason: The Oxford Sources and the Tradition", Prose Studies 1800-1900, Vol. I (1977), pp. 7-18.

"An English Poet" and Marius the Epicurean.¹³ It is a central preoccupation in these works that introspection and personal expression are means of communication with others. In "Charles Lamb" Pater's description of Lamb's self-portraiture leads into a statement that introspection creates a sympathy with others. The details and the constant attention to the concrete in Lamb's essays create "an enduring moral effect also, in a sort of boundless sympathy" (App., p. 112). This habit of concentrating on mundane issues and thereby achieving a fellowship with other men is notably described as a "moral" act. Similarly, in "Sandro Botticelli", where Pater commends Botticelli to the reader for his individuality, morality and sympathy are equated:

So just what Dante scorns as unworthy alike of heaven and hell, Botticelli accepts, that middle world in which men take no side in great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make great refusals. He thus sets for himself the limits within which art, undisturbed by any moral ambition, does its most sincere and surest work . . . His morality is all sympathy; and it is this sympathy, conveying into his work somewhat more than is usual of the true complexion of humanity, which makes him, visionary as he is, so forcible a realist. (SHR, p. 45)

Here, too, realism appears as connected with morality and sympathy.¹⁴ This cluster of ideas--sympathy, morality, realism and introspection--is the theoretical basis of "The Child in the House".

¹³ Although "An English Poet" was never finished, and only published under the editorship of May Ottley in 1931, I follow Germaine de Hangeat and Samuel Wright in dating it in 1878.

¹⁴ A distinction exists in this passage between "moral ambition" and "morality". Pater often expresses a distaste for the former. For example, in "Wordsworth" he says: "One lesson, if men must have lessons, he conveys . . ." (App, p. 59)

ii "The Child in the House"

Pater published "Imaginary Portraits 1. The Child in the House" in Macmillan's Magazine in August 1878.¹⁵ It is perhaps the most perfect piece that he ever wrote. It possesses a perfection and a significance within the corpus of Pater's work which cannot be dismissed by regarding it as an unfulfilled attempt at full-scale autobiography.¹⁶ Pater was to say to himself:

Child in the House: voilà, the germinating, original, source, specimen, of all my imaginative work. 17

This repetition of words denoting "conception" indicates the release from the burden of a communal past which it brought. Fittingly, it takes Pater back to his own personal past, to a fruitful heritage which could not, by definition, have been already "tilled" by previous writers, yet which, in more general terms, is a common experience. Consequently, Pater's methods of quotation in "The Child in the House" are directed towards his themes, in an illuminating way that does not detract from the autonomy of his quoted sources. He quotes the Bible extensively, and is indebted to several literary precursors for imagery and form; Bunyan, Hawthorne, Wordsworth, Goethe and Ruskin.

By April 1878, Pater had revised The Renaissance for a second edition (1877) in which he omitted the "Conclusion". Reactions in 1873 to the

¹⁵ It appeared in Macmillan's Magazine No. CCXXVI (August 1878), 313-21.

¹⁶ For example, in her review of Marius the Epicurean, Mrs. Humphry Ward comments, "The disguise furnished by "The Child in the House" for the autobiographical matter, of which it was obviously composed, was not a particularly happy one; above all, it was not disguise enough." ("Marius the Epicurean", Macmillan's Magazine, LII (June 1885), 133).

¹⁷ Quoted in LWP, p. xxix.

"Conclusion" had been largely unfavourable.¹⁸ For example, John Wordsworth wrote to Pater on 17 March 1873,

. . . after a perusal of the book I cannot disguise from myself that the concluding pages adequately sum up the philosophy of the whole; and that that philosophy is an assertion, that no fixed principles either of religion or morality can be regarded as certain, that the only thing worth living for is momentary enjoyment and that probably or certainly the soul dissolves at death into elements which are destined never to reunite. . . . Could you indeed have known the dangers into which you were likely to lead minds weaker than your own, you would, I believe, have paused. Could you have known the grief your words would be to many of your Oxford contemporaries you might even have found no ignoble pleasure in refraining from uttering them. (LWP No. 20)

The "Conclusion" was restored to the third edition of The Renaissance in 1888, and Pater explains that

On the whole I have thought it best to reprint it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning. I have dealt more fully in Marius the Epicurean with the thoughts suggested by it. (Ren, p. 246)

"The Child in the House" was evidently written at a trying and confused time in Pater's life. The nostalgia which pervades the piece was, perhaps, a welcome retreat from the hostile arena in which he found himself. Autobiography, though, provides the material for a depiction of religion and morality. John Wordsworth saw the "Conclusion" as rejecting these certitudes; he either did not notice, or dismissed as irrelevant, Pater's definition of sympathy and morality in "Sandro Botticelli", which has little to do with orthodox religion, and indeed prefers the mundane world to the celestial realms of Dante's vision. In "The Child in the House" Pater in a sense takes Wordsworth and all similar detractors to task on

¹⁸ It is probable that Pater was passed over for several University posts because of The Renaissance. Benjamin Jowett strongly disapproved of the book. See R.M. Seiler (ed.), Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 19-22, 47-112.

their own ground: that of orthodox religion.¹⁹

In Walter Pater Gerald Monsman says:

It has become fashionable to interpret 'The Child in the House' as a backing away from the espousal in The Renaissance of a private life of exquisite sensations and a turning towards the social, collective ideal of sympathy that culminated in Marius. The basis for this interpretation is that the portrait appeared only a year after the offending 'Conclusion' had been suppressed and that Pater felt the need to produce a 'corrective' to the doctrines of 1873. But although the note of sympathy is struck in 'The Child in the House', Pater's main aim is to defend the morality of aesthetic ecstasy itself by dealing in a semi-autobiographical way with the philosophy of his first volume. (p. 80)

Is "The Child in the House", then, a "corrective" or a justification? The answer is more complex than Monsman would allow. This is largely due to the debt Pater owes to Bunyan in the piece, and the way he uses his work for his own purposes.

"The Child in the House" begins with an act of sympathy towards an old man made by the adult Florian, and Florian's subsequent dream of his childhood is "like a reward for his pity" (MS, p. 171). It ends with the child's act of sympathy towards the forgotten bird. This framing of the story by two sympathetic acts suggests that sympathy is the most valuable and lasting quality to have developed in the child. The Biblical allusions and the echoes of The Pilgrim's Progress emphasize that Pater sees the child's development in moral terms. There are ten quotations from the Bible. These form the presence of a received Christian tradition which

¹⁹ It may be argued that Pater's use of orthodox religion constitutes yet another instance of his "destruction" of past authorities, and that in quoting the Bible in "The Child in the House" he is in fact rejecting the ultimate divine authority.

underpins the story.²⁰ The references to The Pilgrim's Progress perform a more complex function. Bunyan's book was a part of everyone's cultural consciousness throughout the Victorian age, and motifs from it appear in many works, most notably in Dickens's The Old Curiosity Shop.²¹ Pater therefore goes straight to the centre of religious orthodoxy to express his own position. Bunyan's book stresses the responsibility of the Christian for his soul, and the dangers of straying from a rigid Christian system. Pater uses it to define the different development that is possible within a moral framework.

"The Child in the House" begins with Florian Deleal helping an old man with a burden along the road. The following night, "like a reward for his pity", he dreams of his childhood home. This dream causes him to begin "a certain design he then had in view, the noting, namely, of some things in the story of his spirit". The rest of the piece is

²⁰ These quotations are, in tabulated form:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| "with lead in the rock forever" | Job 19: 24 |
| "the lust of the eye" | 1 John 2: 16 |
| "resurrection of the just" | Luke 14: 14 |
| "Joshua's vision in the Bible" | Joshua 5: 13-15 |
| "lively hope" | 1 Peter 1: 3 |
| "the wrestling angel grasped Jacob" | Genesis 32: 24 |
| "how Jacob looked in his mysterious sleep" | Genesis 28: 11-15 |
| "how the bells and pomegranates were attached to the hem of Aaron's vestment, sounding sweetly as he glided over the turf of the holy place" | Exodus 39: 24-26 |
| "the sacred stuffs of Moses' tabernacle" | Exodus 25--27 |
| "the House of Bethany" | Matthew 26: 6-13 |

²¹ The travels of Little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop echo Christian's pilgrimage, for example. In John Bunyan (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 156, Roger Sharrock comments on the changing appreciation of Bunyan during the nineteenth century, a change which occurred against a background of general acquaintance with The Pilgrim's Progress. Many Victorians mention Bunyan as childhood reading in their autobiographies: for example, John Ruskin in Praeterita.

presented as if written by Florian. It examines the influences operating on the child and the ineradicable traits of personality which they create, and ends when he leaves for a new home at the age of twelve. The opening episode creates the conditions whereby Florian the adult can return to his childhood. It is a release through human pity into a greater understanding of oneself:

As Florian Deleal walked, one hot afternoon, he overtook by the wayside a poor aged man, and, as he seemed weary with the road, helped him on with the burden which he carried, a certain distance. And as the man told his story, it chanced that he named the place, a little place in the neighbourhood of a great city, where Florian had passed his earliest years, but which he had never since seen, and, the story told, went forward on his journey comforted. And that night, like a reward for his pity, a dream of that place came to Florian, a dream which did for him the office of the finer sort of memory, bringing its object to mind with a great clearness, yet, as sometimes happens in dreams, raised a little above itself, and above ordinary retrospect. . . . And it happened that this accident of his dream was just the thing needed for the beginning of a certain design he then had in view, the noting, namely, of some things in the story of his spirit--in that process of brainbuilding by which we are, each one of us, what we are. (pp. 171, 172)

Sympathy also gives the writer access to a true "beginning". The figure of the old man reminds us of Wordsworth's old men. However, with his burden and his journey, he evokes Christian in The Pilgrim's Progress.²²

Even the syntax of the opening sentence is familiar:

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a den; and I laid me down in that place to sleep: and as I slept I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. ²³

A marginal note in the text explains that the "den" is the goal. We may

²² Gerald Monsman identifies this evocation in Pater's Portraits, pp. 42-3, and calls it the "central allegory in the portrait", but his subsequent analysis does not derive from this centre.

²³ John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress (London: Penguin, 1965), p. 39.

The opening also echoes Part II of The Pilgrim's Progress:

And as I was in my dream, behold, an aged gentleman came by where I lay; and because he was to go some part of the way that I was travelling, methought I got up and went with him. So as we walked, and as travellers usually do, it was as if we fell into discourse, and our talk happened to be about Christian and his travels: for thus I began with the old man. 'Sir', said I, 'what town is that there below, that lieth on the left hand of our way?' Then said Mr Sagacity, for that was his name, 'It is the City of Destruction, a populous place, but possessed with a very ill-conditioned, and idle sort of people'. (pp. 219-220)

Part II begins after Christian has reached the Celestial City; it refers back to his pilgrimage frequently, and depends upon the teleology of already accomplished salvation for its tolerant portrayal of Christian's and Mercy's feminine weaknesses. "The Child in the House" depends on this received Christian tradition, but its nostalgia subverts the certainty of salvation of Part II of The Pilgrim's Progress. The City of Destruction is the city that Christian flees from, in quest of the City of Sion. The city that is close to the place Florian and the old man mention is both the City of Destruction and the City of Sion. The child leaves the house at the end of the story: he embarks in one sense upon life's pilgrimage, leaving behind him the City of Destruction. It has been described as sending "up heavenwards, over the twisting weather-vanes, not seldom, its beds of rolling cloud and smoke, touched with storm or sunshine" (p. 174). The church is "a citadel of peace in the heart of the trouble" (p. 175). But the child sees beauty in the fog of the city, and "a kind of comeliness and dignity" which he hereafter associates with towns. While living in the house, the child experiences a different journey, one of natural inner growth which is itself depicted in emblems derived from The Pilgrim's Progress. Florian's experiences there are "the first stage in that mental journey". Running counter to the idea of the child eventually setting out on a journey through life,

is that of the heaven of innocence and righteousness residing in the house and the child, and the child gradually moving away from it as he develops. The pilgrimage towards the celestial city becomes a circular movement returning to the first home. Pater talks of

a peculiarly strong sense of home--so forcible a motive with all of us--prompting to us our customary love of the earth, and the larger part of our fear of death, that revulsion we have from it, as from something strange, untried, unfriendly; though life-long imprisonment, they tell you, and final banishment from home is a thing bitterer still; the looking forward to but a short space, a mere childish goûter and dessert of it, before the end, being so great a resource of effort to pilgrims and wayfarers, and the soldier in distant quarters. (p. 178)

The imprisonment of Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle, and the perils of losing God's grace for ever, spring to mind here. The ambiguous character of the "City of Sion" in "The Child in the House" is only perceived in retrospect. Looking back, Florian can recognize the true nature of his childhood, for it is "with tints more musically blent on wall and floor", and "he could watch the better, over again, the gradual expansion of the soul which had come to be there". This is captured for the reader in the closing paragraph, when Florian leaves the house. He looks forward to leaving, and leaves on a "very fine" morning. But the family inadvertently leave behind a pet bird. In going back to fetch it, he is overcome with reluctance to leave, and with nostalgia:

And so, with the bird found, but himself in an agony of homesickness, thus capriciously sprung up within him, he was driven quickly away, far into the rural distance, so fondly speculated on, of that favourite country-road. (p. 197)

The reversal of his feelings, and the fact that the bird is only just saved (the bird is a favourite emblem for the soul in Pater's writings), indicate that one can only recognize righteousness in retrospect. Florian is indeed embarking upon a pilgrimage, but one almost enforced, away from supreme innocence. His soul is only just reserved and sustained after

childhood. The pilgrimage is one of which Florian the adult exclaims, "Could he have foreseen the weariness of the way!" (p. 181)

This childhood innocence, however, is the traditional Christian goal. Pater contrasts it with a life influenced by beauty and culture, "'the lust of the eye', as the Preacher says, which might lead him, one day, how far!" (p. 181) The child's growth during his time in the house is divided into three parts. In the first part, the interiors of the house and garden are described. They are places of security: there is a high garden wall, and the wall-flower is given prominence. The child's parents are present, supervising and protecting. He sits "daily at the window with the birdcage hanging below it, and his mother taught him to read" (p. 176). Hence he looks out of a window under his mother's supervision, and his soul is protected by a cage, as the bird is. He is susceptible only to the influences from without that naturally permeate the atmosphere: the perfume from the lime-blossom, the hum of bees. It is a place "'inclosed' and 'sealed'" (p. 180). Fittingly, his responses are all "inward" at this stage:

Florian found that he owed to the place many tones of sentiment afterwards customary with him, certain inward lights under which things most naturally presented themselves to him. . . . ever afterwards the like aspects and incidents never failed to throw him into a well-recognised imaginative mood, seeming actually to have become a part of the texture of his mind. (pp. 175, 176)

But this is only one side of the "gradual expansion of the soul" which Pater wishes to examine. The house is only "half-spiritualised": it is an actual building as well as a symbol for the body enclosing the soul (the house seems like the "face of one dead" at the end when the family have left it). It is therefore one of the material objects which cause "inward and outward [to be] woven through and through each other into one inextricable texture" (p. 172). The house and the garden wall possess

the same ambiguity as "the wall of custom" which Pater elsewhere condemns; they can be either vitalizing or deadening influences, depending on Florian's success in progressively identifying their externalities as no longer foreign but as that in which his dreams consist. Through the garden wall, for the child, steal "the realities and passions, the rumours of the greater world without" (p. 177).

The second part, therefore, introduces external influences. The child's father dies, and the news breaks the wall around the child. It strikes "into his soul for ever" (p. 183), and significantly it comes from far outside the circle of the child's life, from "distant India". These influences, then, come without parental acquiescence. They come in "as at windows left ajar unknowingly, or over the high garden walls" (p. 180). In this section Florian releases a starling from a cage. He does this out of pity for the mother bird and her young, who have been separated. The breakdown of security becomes a release of sympathy. This positive image of expansion is adumbrated in the image of the hawthorn:

it happened that, as he walked one evening, a garden gate, usually closed, stood open; and lo! within, a great red hawthorn in full flower, embossing heavily the bleached and twisted trunk and branches, so aged that there were but few green leaves thereon--a plumage of tender, crimson fire out of the heart of the dry wood. (p. 185)

This beauty has a seductive throb. It resembles the forbidden fruit hanging temptingly over the Devil's garden wall on the road to the House of the Interpreter in Part II of The Pilgrim's Progress:

Now there was, on the other side of the wall that fenced in the way up which Christiana and her companions was to go, a Garden; and that Garden belonged to him whose was that barking dog, of whom mention was made before. And some of the fruit-trees that grew in that Garden shot their branches over the wall, and being mellow, they that found them did gather them up and oft eat of them to their hurt. So Christiana's boys, as boys are apt to do, being pleased with the trees, and with the fruit that did hang thereon, did plash them, and began to eat. Their mother did also chide them for so doing, but still the boys went on. (pp. 240-1)

The distinction between this forbidden fruit and the hawthorn is that the latter may be "forbidden fruit" in one sense, but it also has an innate and inviolable beauty, and its "plumage of tender, crimson fire out of the heart of the dry wood" is another of Pater's instances of "renaissance", of new impulses springing up. Florian is in fact permitted to pick armfuls of the hawthorn to decorate the home. Nonetheless, "A touch of regret or desire mingled all night with the remembered presence of the red flowers" and they cause the beginning of "a kind of tyranny of the senses over him" (p. 186). Pater emphasizes that concurrently with the appreciation of beauty, the child's apprehension of pain develops. Pain is what leads the child to feeling sympathy. Beauty and the pain of death together develop his preference for the sensuous over the abstract, and determine in him his personal conception of religion:

In later years he came upon philosophies which occupied him much in the estimate of the proportion of the sensuous and the ideal elements in human knowledge, the relative parts they bear in it; and, in his intellectual scheme, was led to assign very little to the abstract thought, and much to its sensible vehicle or occasion. Such metaphysical speculation did but reinforce what was instinctive in his way of receiving the world, and for him, everywhere, that sensible vehicle or occasion became, perhaps only too surely, the necessary concomitant of any perception of things, real enough to be of any weight or reckoning, in his house of thought. There were times when he could think of the necessity he was under of associating all thoughts to touch and sight, as a sympathetic link between himself and actual, feeling, living objects; a protest in favour of real men and women against mere grey, unreal abstractions; and he remembered gratefully how the Christian religion, . . . translating so much of its spiritual verity into things that may be seen, condescends in part to sanction this infirmity, if so it be, of our human existence. (pp. 186-7).

The disclaimers of the sensuous way of receiving the world ("perhaps only too surely", "infirmity, of so it be") are offset by the sympathy it reflects, and by the reminder that even Christianity allows for sensuousness. It is, of course, precisely this embodiment of abstract thought in concrete

visual form that Pater defines as Plato's genius. We may also recall Bunyan's own apology for and justification of his use of metaphor in The Pilgrim's Progress, where he too claims the authority of the Bible for his practice:

Be not too forward therefore to conclude
That I want solidness, that I am rude:
All things solid in show not solid be;
All things in parables despise not we
Lest things most hurtful mightly we receive;
And things that good are, of our sould bereave.
My dark and cloudy words they do but hold
The truth, as cabinets enclose the gold. (p. 34)

The third part of "The Child in the House" examines the kind of religion which has accordingly developed in the child: a combination of Bunyan's traditional Christianity and a cultural infusion of humanistic sympathy and beauty. Pater shows how the apprehension of beauty can lead towards a version of religion, and therefore be moral; but also how it diverges from the received Christian tradition. For Florian, religion becomes a support and a "sentinel" over the questioning soul. The irreconcilable difference between the religious reverie over death and the physical reality does not turn him away from religion but draws him to it. Religion is an almost secular consolation for the inescapable physical decay:

His way of conceiving religion came then to be in effect what it ever afterwards remained--a sacred history indeed, but still more a sacred ideal, a transcendent version or representation, under intenser and more expressive light and shade, of human life and its familiar or exceptional incidents, birth, death, marriage, youth, age, tears, joy, rest, sleep, waking--a mirror towards which men might turn away their eyes from vanity and dullness, and see themselves therein as angels, with their daily meat and drink, even, become a kind of sacred transaction. (p. 194)

The fact that "Angels might be met by the way" (p. 195) recalls the appearances of the Evangelist to Christian. However, religion becomes an interpretative dimension of life; life is no longer the stepping stone

to a later, celestial existence. The quotations from Bunyan in this section are instrumental in relocating religion in life, rather than in life after death. Frank Kermode talks of one effect of the humanization of religious terms, of

the sense men sometimes have of participating in some order of duration other than that of the nunc movens--of being able, as it were, to do all that angels can. . . they are moments of what psychologists call 'temporal integration'. 26

This secularization therefore rejects the traditional Christian goal of the Celestial City, the ideal "End", in favour of a moment of artistic completeness (which Pater talks about in the "Conclusion"), and hence, in favour of Florian's allegiance to art. His religion is now firmly based upon nature: the hawthorn.

While Pater employs Bunyan as an index of his move towards Christianity as a humanistic ideal, he also adopts Bunyan's imaginative technical use of the emblem. The emblematic devices of the house, the wall, the road, the tower, are indicative of Pater's previous use of biography, and of his move into imaginative writing.

The figures of the old man and the child, and the triad of the child, adult observer and nature, all derive from Wordsworth, whose influence pervades "The Child in the House". Pater's essay "On Wordsworth" was published four years earlier, in April 1874.²⁷ As Harold Bloom says, "most modern scholars agree that Pater's Wordsworth is too much Pater's Marius, and too little Wordsworth",²⁸ but the qualities Pater discerns

²⁶ The Sense of an Ending, p. 71.

²⁷ It was published in the Fortnightly Review No. LXXXVIII, Vol. XXI (o.s.), XV (N.S.), 456-65.

²⁸ *op. cit.*, p. xxvi.

in Wordsworth illuminate the train of thought he was pursuing in "The Child in the House". Pater sees Wordsworth as a disciple of a kind of pagan religion, and connects this with pantheistic doctrines. He stresses Wordsworth's almost solely inward life, which nurtured a profound sensibility "to the sights and sounds of the natural world" (App, p. 43). And,

such power of seeing life, such perception of a soul, in inanimate things, came of an exceptional susceptibility to the impressions of eye and ear, and was, in its essence, a kind of sensuousness. At least, it is only in a temperament exceptionally susceptible on the sensuous side, that this sense of the expressiveness of outward things comes to be so large a part of life. (pp. 46-7)

This is just like Florian, but unlike his development, Wordsworth is not seen to convert Christianity into a religious reflection of these feelings: rather, he evolves, like the Greeks, a religion from his responses to nature:

Religious sentiment, consecrating the affections and natural regrets of the human heart, above all, that pitiful awe and care for the perishing human clay, of which relic-worship is but the corruption, has always had much to do with localities, with the thoughts which attach themselves to actual scenes and places. Now what is true of it everywhere, is truest of it in those secluded valleys where one generation after another maintains the same abiding-place; and it was on this side, that Wordsworth apprehended religion most strongly. Consisting, as it did so much, in the recognition of local sanctities, in the habit of connecting the stones and trees of a particular spot of earth with the great events of life, till the low walls, the green mounds, the half-obliterated epitaphs seemed full of voices, and a sort of natural oracles, the very religion of these people of the dales appeared but as another link between them and the earth, and was literally a religion of nature. (pp. 48-9)

After stressing that Wordsworth's religion is therefore based on nature and on ties of affection for the landscape (very similar to Florian's spiritual connection with his first home and to his introduction to beauty through a natural object, the hawthorn), Pater combines Wordsworth's way of responding to nature with morality:

One lesson, if men must have lessons, he conveys more clearly than all, the supreme importance of contemplation in the conduct of life. . .

That the end of life is not action but contemplation--being as distinct from doing--a certain disposition of the mind: is, in some shape or other, the principle of all the higher morality. (pp. 59,61)

This swiftly becomes a justification for appreciating art. Pater has led the reader gently from agreeing that sensuousness can be a form of religion to seeing that there is no irreconcilable opposition between religion and art:

To treat life in the spirit of art, is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified: to encourage such treatment, the true moral significance of art and poetry. Wordsworth, and other poets who have been like him in ancient and more recent times, are the masters, the experts, in this art of impassioned contemplation. Their work is, not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends; but to withdraw the thoughts for a little while from the mere machinery of life, to fix them, with appropriate emotions, on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects . . . To witness this spectacle with appropriate emotions is the aim of all culture. (pp. 61-2)

The aim of this passage is to transfer religion to the realms of art, and to justify the appreciation of art as an activity which is autonomously satisfactory. Florian's growing appreciation of beauty in natural things like the hawthorn will lead him on a long and weary journey; one can only assume away from traditional religion while not away from morality, as he leaves at the end a spiritual sanctuary.

Wordsworth's philosophy of the "Child of Joy" who comes "trailing clouds of glory" in Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood, is therefore very important for our understanding of "The Child in the House". In his essay on Wordsworth Pater says,

he conceived those oft-reiterated regrets for a half-ideal childhood, when the relics of Paradise still clung about the soul--a childhood, as it seemed, full of the fruits of old age, lost for all, in a degree, in the passing away of the youth of the world, lost for each one, over again, in the passing away of actual youth. (pp. 53-4)

Pater's non-committal attitude towards this philosophy is understandable, given his rejection of Blake's similar belief and his fondness for Plato

who also thought it so; it is characteristically Victorian.²⁹ But like other Victorian writers, too, he sees childhood as a vital time for formative influences. The first section of "The Child in the House" connects the child's developments with Wordsworth's (and Pater's) "recognition of local sanctities, . . . the habit of connecting the stones and trees of a particular spot of earth with the great events of life" that becomes "literally a religion of nature" (pp. 48-9).

However, Pater's main debt to Wordsworth is to be found in the autobiographical impetus lent by The Prelude, where nostalgia and introspection are permitted to form the basis of a work of art.³⁰ Florian's design at the beginning is "the noting, namely, of some things in the story of his spirit--in that process of brainbuilding by which we are, each one of us, what we are" (MS, p. 172). Although Wordsworth composed The Prelude at the end of his career and it was not published until 1850, and Pater wrote this at the beginning of his, Wordsworth's aims coincide with Pater's prerequisite for sympathy with others: introspection. In Book I of The Prelude Wordsworth says,

Meanwhile my hope has been, that I might fetch
Invigorating thoughts from former years;
Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,
And haply meet reproaches too, whose power

²⁹ See U.C. Knoepfelmacher, "Mutations of the Wordsworthian Child of Nature", Nature and the Victorian Imagination, eds. U.C. Knoepfelmacher and G.B. Tennyson (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977), pp. 391-425.

³⁰ In Beginnings, pp. 44-5, Edward Said examines Paradise Lost and The Prelude as "beginning poems":

In both instances what was initially intended to be the beginning became the work itself. . . . It is no accident, I think, that both poems are beginning poems--in the sense that each prepares for something more important to follow--and that both are therefore ways of delimiting, defining, and circumscribing human freedom. . . . As a poem of beginning, The Prelude sheds its unconditional early liberty for the purpose of forging the beginning--as distinguished from a narrator's more initial enthusiasm.

May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
 To honourable toil. Yet should these hopes
 Prove vain, and thus should neither I be taught
 To understand myself, nor thou to know
 With better knowledge how the heart was framed
 Of him thou lovest; need I dread from thee
 Harsh judgements. 31

Wordsworth's "spots of time" are also recaptured in Pater's stunning, episodic descriptions of the hawthorn, the wasp sting, and the news of the father's death. Another Wordsworthian device strengthens the narrative of "The Child in the House": the retrospective distance between the adult and the child. In Book II of The Prelude Wordsworth says:

so wide appears
 The vacancy between me and those days
 Which yet have such self-presence in my mind,
 That, musing on them, often do I seem
 Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
 And of some other Being. 32

Finally, the quality of introspection is further defined when we compare "The Child in the House" with two of Pater's other essays, "Leonardo da Vinci" and "Charles Lamb". Leonardo and Florian both release caged birds when they are children. Leonardo's adventurous spirit leads him in the same spiritual direction as Florian is to go: towards beauty, and a mystical sensuousness. When Pater says,

he plunged also into human personality, and became above all a painter of portraits; faces of a modelling more skilful than has been seen before or since, embodied with a reality which almost amounts to illusion on dark air. To take a character as it was,

³¹ The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind, Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, new ed., Ernest de Selincourt (London: OUP, 1969), 11. 620-30.

³² *op. cit.*, 11. 28-33. This double vision recurs in many Victorian novels such as Great Expectations and The Mill on the Floss. At the same time, Pater adopts the relationship between the adult observer and the old man who enables the observer to learn something new about himself and his feelings. The emphasis in "The Child in the House" is upon learning, for both the child and the adult.

and delicately sound its stops, suited one so curious in observation, curious in invention. (SHR, p. 104)

he expresses a conception of "reality" which is associated with the archaeology of personality, with delving deep and then making connections. Reality is not solely "truth of life", but equally an interest in the inner workings of the mind, and so, a sympathy with others.

In "Charles Lamb" this is Pater's main concern. Lamb examines his own experiences in order to share them with the reader. Florian and Lamb share the same countryside as home. Florian lives in Surrey or Kent; the house

stood near a great city, which sent up heavenwards, over the twisting weather-vanes, not seldom, its beds of rolling cloud and smoke, touched with storm or sunshine. (MS, p. 174)

Charles Lamb's suburban home is identical:

Here, the surface of things is certainly humdrum, the streets dingy, the green places, where the child goes a-maying, tame enough. But nowhere are things more apt to respond to the brighter weather, nowhere is there so much difference between rain and sunshine, nowhere do the clouds roll together more grandly; those quaint suburban pastorals gathering a certain quality of grandeur from the background of the great city, with its weighty atmosphere, and portent of storm in the rapid light on dome and bleached stone steeples. 33

Pater finds this kind of landscape particularly "home-like", and he

³³ App, pp. 125-6. This particular passage was very important to Pater. The essay originally appeared in the Fortnightly Review No. CXLII, Vol. XXX, 466-74 on 1 October 1878 entitled "The Character of the Humourist: Charles Lamb". There, the last paragraph contains additional phrases:

Here, the surface of things is certainly humdrum, the streets dingy, the green places, where the child goes a-maying, tame enough. But nowhere are things more apt to respond to the brighter weather, nowhere is there so much difference between rain and sunshine, nowhere do the clouds roll together more grandly, mounting a little way till the sun touches their dun into gold; those quaint pastorals gathering a certain quality of grandeur from the background of the great city, visible from those distant fields also, with its weighty atmosphere, and portent of storm, in the rapid light on dome and bleached stone steeples. (p. 474)

connects it with Flemish and Dutch paintings. In both "Charles Lamb" and "On Wordsworth" there are passing references to Flemish painting.³⁴ In "On Wordsworth", too, we find Pater wishing that the poet had written about Surrey:

the peculiar function of Wordsworth's genius, as carrying in it a power to open out the soul of apparently little or familiar things, would have found its true test had he become the poet of Surrey, say! and the prophet of its life. 35

This fondness for a Flemish landscape is a Romantic attitude: Sir Joshua Reynolds, for instance, expresses contempt for painters he thinks are

only ridiculous when they attempt general history on their own narrow principles, and debase great events by the meanness of their characters. 36

³⁴ "Charles Lamb": App, p. 121; "On Wordsworth": App, pp. 42-3. In contrast, Pater is reputed to have "disposed of the conventional fondness for Swiss scenery by declaring that he always shut his eyes when travelling through Switzerland, to avoid seeing those 'horrid pots of blue paint', the lakes" (Michael Levey, p. 116).

³⁵ App, p. 48. cf. A.C. Bradley, Oxford Lectures on Poetry (London: Macmillan, 1909), p. 128:

Pater's essay is not thus one-sided. It is, to my mind, an extremely fine piece of criticism. Yet the tendency to which I am objecting does appear in it. Pater says, for example, that Wordsworth is the poet of nature, 'and of nature, after all, in her modesty. The English Lake country has, of course, its grandeurs. But the peculiar function of Wordsworth's genius, as carrying in it a power to open out the soul of apparently little and familiar things, would have found its true test had he become the poet of Surrey, say! and the prophet of its life.' This last sentence is, in one sense, doubtless true. The 'function' referred to could have been exercised in Surrey, and was exercised in Dorset and Somerset, as well as in the Lake country. And this function was a 'peculiar function of Wordsworth's genius'. But that it was the peculiar function of his genius, or more peculiar than that other function which forms our present subject, I venture to deny; and for the full exercise of this latter function, it is hardly hazardous to assert Wordsworth's childhood in a mountain district, and his subsequent residence there, were indispensable. This will be doubted for a moment, I believe, only by those readers (and they are not a few) who ignore the Prelude and the Excursion.

³⁶ Discourses, p. 54.

George Eliot draws the comparison of Dutch and Flemish painting for her sympathy with ordinary people in Adam Bede.

These essays form a growing examination of the qualities of a modern writer and they show Pater's movement towards a manifesto of his own aims in later work. In "On Wordsworth" Pater explicitly identifies the qualities of introspection and sympathy as being modern; he retained this section in his reviews of editions of Wordsworth in 1889:

An intimate consciousness of the expression of natural things, which weighs, listens, penetrates, where the earlier mind passed roughly by, is a large element in the complexion of modern poetry. It has been remarked as a fact in mental history again and again. It reveals itself in many forms; but is strongest and most attractive in modern literature. (p. 41)

"The Child in the House" does introduce the quality of sympathy as a concern in Pater's work, but not, as Monsman says, as a "corrective" to the philosophy of The Renaissance. It is a result of the isolation so movingly felt and depicted in that volume; it forms the basis of a personal poetics of creative writing. It derives from a Romantic conviction of the importance of introspection, most importantly expressed in Wordsworth's The Prelude and in Charles Lamb's essays. The connection of religion, morality and nature leads Pater back to his conviction that art is the most important embodiment of sympathy, thereby releasing in Pater's writing the use of character and realism for fiction.

iii "An English Poet"

The unfinished "Imaginary Portrait No. 2: An English Poet" extends the implicit aim of "The Child in the House" to depict the "Growth of a Poet's Mind", as The Prelude is subtitled.³⁷ This child grows up in

³⁷ op. cit. This is also reprinted in Eugene J. Brzenk (ed.), Imaginary Portraits by Walter Pater (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

Cumberland. Once again he develops the quality of sympathy so necessary to creative energy for Pater. He is older than Florian, and experiences beauty in both nature and art:

two things only of it all had coaxed out his capacity for liking-- a red honeysuckle over the gateway of the grange, the one more stately habitation in the place, in remarkably free flower this year, and a range of metal screen-work, twisted with fantastic grace into wreaths of flames or flowers. (p. 439)

The portrait plots the development of his artistic ambition, largely through his reading in literature of the past. But Pater complicates the development considerably. The child is born in France, to a young English woman, and he is fathered in a mystical sense by a stranger who resembles the profile on a Roman coin. The French farmstead where the child is born is very like Florian's home, down to the enclosed haven-like security:

The great characteristic of the Pays de Caux, the district from which our Norman conquerors mostly came, is the singular arrangement by which each of its farms is isolated from the outer world by a dense enclosure of trees. . . . The gate is usually surmounted by a rough pent-house, overgrown with moss and tall house-leeks, and the heavy stone gate-posts will be sometimes quaintly carved. In the space within there is room and to spare for the large straggling barns and the house with its white plastered walls. There is room for a garden also, and a careless orchard, where the blossoms hang almost motionless all their season through, although a strong wind may be abroad without, rocking roughly the bigger trees. . . . Here the principle of chez soi is complete. (pp. 435-6)

When the mother dies, the child is sent away to Cumberland, but he cannot appreciate the landscape there at all, partly because it is not his true home, and partly because it is not an immediately sympathetic countryside like Surrey or Kent. Pater is commenting indirectly on Wordsworth's development in the Lake District, and contrasting it with the home-counties, where he wishes ^{Wordsworth} had lived. The mountains form barriers and prevent that sympathy so necessary to art:

The solemn girdle of hills . . . does but shut them off from opportunity, from the city, the university, the brave gathering place

of art, where the business of the mind is done, and the sacred fire is kept up whence their minds also might take sacred fire. (p. 438)

Pater does not deny the beauty of Cumberland, but suggests that an education in art is essential for appreciating this kind of nature. The images of art and poetry in the following passage underline this:

there were things, a delicate beauty about the Cumberland farm the boy never looked at; the tender plumage of the water-birds' breasts, for instance, against the dark lake as they went in squadron down it, leaving the long curves as if drawn with some fine artist's pen on the still surface at evening. He might have been thawed at least by the scent of the wood-lilies in spring, the scent of the free-flowing winds even at sunset, by the old immemorial poetry of the murmur of innumerable bees. But he valued none of these things. (pp. 440-1)

Never having ventured beyond the barrier of the Cumberland mountains, the child has no vocabulary with which to express his feelings; he wants "some concrete imagery which might fix the wandering vision" (p. 441). There follows an extensive education in literature. Deprived of his true home, placed in an unhomelike habitat, and consequently deprived of community by the barrier of the mountains, he has to turn to his literary heritage in order to develop--unlike Florian, who can adopt the divine sources of the Bible and The Pilgrim's Progress for his own uses. Here Pater is once again musing on the difficulties of beginnings and the burden of the past which exclusion or isolation creates.

However, when he grows up the child revisits the countryside of his birthplace. He is on his way to the south, where so many of Pater's heroes are impelled. The now mature poet is experiencing consciousness of the ensuing description. He is now able to appreciate the poetry of nature; he looks at the estuary of a river, where freshwater merges with seawater:

That place with its vast grey, yellow-lichened Norman church, lay amidst the sand dunes grown richly about with wild marigold and yellow horned poppies at the mouth of a river which came down from the tranquil French cornfields, with a sudden breadth and openness towards the sea in the last few miles of its course. And the boy savoured

profoundly all the poetry, the quickening influence for the fancy, of the tidal character of this river, the strong pulse of the invisible sea rising so subtly along its windings, till the blue water far inland almost touched the corn; of the gradual change to a sort of greatness in its character as it came nearer to the coast, dropping one by one all its inland marks. (pp. 447-8)

Here is a poetic image of the merging effects of sympathy, and a celebration of expansion which rejects the narrow confines of the river in favour of the immensity of the sea. But the sea's innate melancholy is also hinted at:

Perhaps no phase of coast scenery brings the sentiment of the strange life of the sea more intimately home to one than those parts of the coast where at low water the tide falls far away, leaving many miles of sand, dropping out of sight almost . . . How hard when all is at the flood to think of the far-off whisper across the sand! (p. 448)

This desolation reminds us of Pater's cry of distress in "Poems by William Morris":

Such thoughts seem desolate at first; at times all the bitterness of life seems concentrated in them. They bring the image of one washed out beyond the bar in a sea at ebb, losing even his personality, as the elements of which he is composed pass into new combinations. (p. 311)

In "An English Poet" the meeting-place of land and sea, freshwater and saltwater, however, reconciles and dismisses the haunting spectres of Pater's fears. The meeting-place can represent a protective boundary (being near the poet's home), as well as a liberating influence, and its dual nature is captured in the final sentence of this fragment:

Fancies, divinations of a real experience as a thing that might be refulgent with ideal light and satisfy a poetic soul, germinating rapidly in him a warmth, a souffle, almost like love towards the friend who was coming, came to him, as the strong air from the waves and the scent of the bean-field met about him. (p. 448)

The beanfield here is an image of enclosure; its protection and the freedom of the sea are equal forces, both touching the poet where he stands. This harmony awakens in him an artistic breadth of response.

In "An English Poet" Pater does not inveigh against Cumberland as a landscape for which he has no use, but because it does not represent for him the essentially homelike surroundings which he holds so dear. The

child's natural home is important for Pater because it offers the opportunity of originality; it is a perfect origin, and there is no burden of a past belonging to others. But it is again an ideal, for it only operates like this when the child or poet is not isolated from community with others by a barrier, be it a range of mountains or a garden wall. The suburban landscape can always communicate the proximity of others: it signifies the secure roots of the home and the opportunities of the city. This concern with environment is not unusual with the Victorians. Ruskin, for example, contrasts Giorgione's and Turner's childhood settings in "The Two Boyhoods", in an attempt to dispel the mysticism surrounding the Wordsworthian child and to replace it with a more ordinary possibility for sympathetic creativity.³⁸ His description of his own childhood, in Praeterita, traces the effects upon him of living in Herne Hill. These intensely domestic and suburban childhoods are repeated in many Victorian biographies, and betray a distrust of the possibly anti-social tendencies of the wholly Wordsworthian "child of joy". "Home" and "homeliness" cease to be subjective, and become uncompromising descriptions of a certain environment considered best for the child: protected, domesticated, supervised surroundings. Pater pursues the question of a natural artistic heritage within these given bounds. He attempts to relate even exotic art to a basic "homeliness". He therefore bestows a mythic parentage upon his English poet in order to account for his predilection for voluptuous art:

Only with his peculiar temper, chilled, repressed a little as with partly-suspended animation, it was necessary that such imagery should be exotic, that it should come with some secret of excitement, stirring him deftly from without. (p. 441)

³⁸ "The Two Boyhoods", Chapter IX of Modern Painters Vol. V, Part IX, pp. 374-88 of The Works, vol. 7.

It is significant that this piece was never completed. By dwelling on problematic beginnings, Pater cannot find a satisfactory ending. He breaks off when the poet returns to his place of origin, and suggests that the poet will soon die of tuberculosis. But this death is not integral to the symbols of the problem of heritage that he has created. As Frank Kermode says,

Men, like poets, rush 'into the midstest', in medias res, when they are born; they also die in mediis rebus, and to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems. The End they imagine will reflect their irreducibly intermediary preoccupations. They fear it, and as far as we can see have always done so; the End is a figure for their own deaths. (So, perhaps, are all ends in fiction, even if represented, as they are for example by Kenneth Burke, as cathartic discharges.) (p. 7)

iv Marius the Epicurean

In the spring of 1881 Pater began research for Marius the Epicurean. Germain d'Hangest considers both "The Child in the House" and "An English Poet" to be attempts at a form which eventually found satisfactory expression in Marius. Certainly the opening two chapters borrow many phrases from "An English Poet".³⁹ Marius is the point at which Pater moved wholly into fictional writing: even in "An English Poet" there are many autobiographical details, such as the child's programme of reading. In Marius Pater faces the problem of ending. However, his personal experiences are concealed behind the persona of a young Italian of the second century AD. It is this use of literary character which creates the problems of the novel. Pater wrote Marius for personal reasons that do not take into account the gap between reality and fiction. Therefore

³⁹ D'Hangest examines the similarities in phrasing in I, 366-7, n. 5.

the book has no satisfactory character and no satisfactory ending.

Marius was well received at the time of its first publication in 1885.⁴⁰ Pater cared deeply about it: he revised it several times.⁴¹ Yet as R.V. Osbourn says,

the question to be asked by the not immediately sympathetic reader is whether or not he will be in any way rewarded for accepting the demands for constant minute attention. During the past thirty years the question has been asked and answered, and Marius appears to have been, with sufficiently general agreement, assessed and placed. The place usually allocated is one somewhere on the less accessible library shelves reserved for those unfortunate books which are unfailingly mentioned in histories of literature but very seldom read.⁴²

Marius does have greater stature in the literary histories than any of Pater's works except for The Renaissance, but it inspires in many readers an indignant distaste, boredom, or frustration. Most critics either justify a high evaluation of Marius by arguing that it is an experimental novel pointing towards twentieth-century fiction, or they evade the problem of evaluation altogether by studying sources, regarding it as a form of historical fiction, "Bildungsroman", or autobiography.

In a most interesting article, Vernon Lee remarks upon the beauty of an early passage in the book, when Marius travels towards the temple of Aesculapius. However, at the same time, she notes Pater's lack of feeling for active vocabulary:

Pater was constitutionally incapable of realizing vividly how exterior events take place and the successions and co-existences implied in all action, events being retained in his memory only as emotional or sensorial effects; Pater's kind of thinking being of coexistence in his own mind, not of sequence in the world outside it.⁴³

⁴⁰ See Seiler, pp. 22-26, 113-161.

⁴¹ See Chandler.

⁴² "Marius the Epicurean", Essays in Criticism I (1951), 387-8.

⁴³ "The Handling of Words: A Page of Walter Pater", Life and Letters 9 (1933), 287-310.

This lack has a different effect on our appreciation of a single passage and on our reading of two volumes of the same. We feel exasperated with the latter. This preference for brevity is no frivolous criticism. As Vernon Lee notes, Pater does not present a truly progressive narrative at all. He portrays a static series of tableaux which form a ⁴⁴ rhythm of events. R.T. Leneghan suggests that Pater is trying to arrest incessant flux in momentary, stable images, and

The result of this technique is, to adopt a new metaphor, something like an art lecture: the lecturer presents his slides in sequence and develops a general argument by a more or less direct running commentary on them. ⁴⁵

The tension of uniting slides and commentary exists within the author; he has the responsibility of making the narrative flow, and

As fiction, this has the bad result of locating the tension in the narrator's present, Pater's now, and stranding the subjects of the imaginary portraits, Marius, Duke Carl, and the others, back in a static then. (p. 91)

Leneghan, however, does not consider the difference in the narrator's responsibility for a two-volume novel, and for a short portrait of perhaps ten thousand words. In Marius the narrator occupies the immediate consciousness of the reader. This is exacerbated by the stretch of time between the second century and the nineteenth century. It is not the same distance as obtains in The Prelude or in Goethe's Dichtung und Wahrheit, where the function of retrospection provides the raison d'être for an autobiography. That distance is handled well by Pater in "The Child in the House" and "An English Poet". In Marius the relationship

⁴⁴ This technique is often commented upon by critics, but provokes a variety of evaluations. T.S. Eliot, for example, condemned Marius partly for this ("Arnold and Pater", Selected Essays, London: Faber, 1951, pp. 431-43).

⁴⁵ "Pattern in Walter Pater's Fiction", Studies in Philology, LVIII (January 1961), 90.

between Marius and Pater is deliberately obfuscated. We have a narrator who is trying simultaneously to identify himself with, and distance himself from, the main character.

Marius is neither autobiography nor historical novel, and although in other works Pater crosses generical boundaries with fruitful results for his writing, here he merely confuses the reader's expectations beyond tolerance. The rash of historical novels in the nineteenth century were mostly action-packed sagas, such as Kingsley's Westward Ho!, and their extremely typified characters thrive in a narrative which provides all the interest through action and event.⁴⁶ Pater makes Marius a transparent character who lacks active participation and personality for a different reason. Unlike Florian, Marius has become a symbol for an attitude of mind. The "type", created in "Diaphaneité" and developed in The Renaissance, has combined with the autobiographical figure in "The Child in the House" to create a basic confusion in Pater's narration.

In Plato and Platonism Pater connects introspection with truth:

From first to last our faculty of thinking is limited by our command of speech. Now it is straight from Plato's lips, as if in natural conversation, that the language came, in which the mind has ever since been discoursing with itself concerning itself, in that inward dialogue, which is the 'active principle' of the dialectic method as an instrument for the attainment of truth. For, the essential, or dynamic, dialogue, is ever that dialogue of the mind with itself, which any converse with Socrates or Plato does but promote. The very words of Plato, then, challenge us straightway to larger and finer apprehension of the processes of our own minds; are themselves a discovery in the sphere of mind. (p. 129)

⁴⁶ See James C. Simmons, The Novelist as Historian: Essays on the Victorian Historical Novel (Hague: Mouton, 1973). Kingsley wrote Westward Ho! (1855) as a prose epic of England's naval history, of "the Drakes and Hawkins, Gilberts and Raleighs, Grenvilles and Oxenham's, and a host more of 'forgotten worthies'," to whom England "owes her commerce, her colonies, her very existence"; he writes in memory of "these men, their voyages and their battles, their faith and their valour, their heroic lives and no less heroic deaths" (Westward Ho!, London: Dent, 1976, Chapter 1, 10). This is similar to Leslie Stephen's description of the gallery of sailors portrayed in the DNB, quoted in Chapter II.

Pater is quoting here from Matthew Arnold's Preface to his "First Edition of Poems" (1853). Arnold explains why he has suppressed his poem "Empedocles on Etna", by comparing the later philosophy of the Greeks with their earlier, more purely Hellenic works:

What those who are familiar only with the great monuments of early Greek genius suppose to be its exclusive characteristics, have disappeared; the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and Faust. ⁴⁷

Arnold hastens to add that he does not deny the interest of "the representation of such a man's feelings", but he requires a stricter criterion than mere "interest" for poetry: "It is demanded, not only that it shall interest, but also that it shall inspire and rejoice the reader; that it shall convey a charm, and infuse delight" (p. 2).

Pater is in accord with Arnold in deploring the modern tendency to doubt and be discouraged, but he does not consequently exclude it as a suitable topic for poetry, as Arnold does. Pater instead seeks to give such an inner dialogue form, in Marius the Epicurean. Concomitant with this is the discussion of artistic expression which runs through the book. In portraying the second century AD, he is examining the philosophical questions of his own day;⁴⁸ Marius himself represents "that inward dialogue, which is the 'active principle' of the dialectic method as an instrument for the attainment of truth" (P&P, p. 129).

⁴⁷ "Preface" to First Edition of Poems, in The Complete Prose Works, Vol. I (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1960), ed. R.H. Super, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Marcus Aurelius and the second century AD were favourite comparisons for the Victorians and many articles appeared in periodicals on the similarities between them and the nineteenth century at the time when Pater was composing Marius the Epicurean. See Kenneth Allott, "Pater and Arnold", Essays in Criticism, ii (1952), 219-21, and Young, p. 4, n. 9.

The quest for truth amid a variety of philosophical positions is therefore the theme of the book, and is encapsulated in the persona of Marius, whose main characteristic is his continual self-questioning. It is echoed within each of the four major philosophies which are examined: the religion of Numa, the Epicureanism Marius turns to after Flavian's death, the Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius, and the Christianity which Cornelius and Cecilia follow.

The religion of Numa resembles Wordsworth's religion which Pater describes in "On Wordsworth", and like Pater's analysis there, it provides a perfect origin for the child. Yet death, which in "On Wordsworth" is naturally included in the scheme of religion, is here an incipient problem. Marius's family home gives him many of the original affections that Pater holds so dear, but his religion cannot protect him from death, and indeed his family home is as much a cemetery as a living house: Marius and his mother are the last of their line, and are far outnumbered by the dead. Marius must travel to the temple of Aesculapius to be healed of a childhood illness. This preoccupation with death is symbolized by the recurring snakes in Book I: Marius experiences an irrational fear of them which "enhanced still further this sentiment of home as a place of tried security":

the sense of some unexplored evil, ever dogging his footsteps, made him oddly suspicious of particular places and persons. Though his liking for animals was so strong, yet one fierce day in early summer, as he walked along a narrow road, he had seen the snakes breeding; and had ever afterwards avoided that place and its ugly associations, for there had been something in the incident which had made food distasteful and his sleep uneasy for many days afterwards. 49

⁴⁹ Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas, 2 vols., (London: Macmillan, 1885), Vol. I, pp. 24-25. Subsequent references to this, the first edition, will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by ME.

In contrast, the temple of Aesculapius, which is a place of healing, abounds in snakes because "it was under the form of a serpent that Aesculapius had come to Rome" (p. 33). Ruskin describes the dual nature of the snake appositely for the symbolism which Pater ascribes to it:

[The serpent] is a divine hieroglyph of the demoniac power of the earth,--of the entire earthly nature. As the bird is the clothed power of the air, so this is the clothed power of the dust; as the bird the symbol of the spirit of life, so this of the grasp and sting of death.

Hence the continual change in the interpretation put upon it in various religions. As the worm of corruption, it is the mightiest of all adversaries of the gods--the special adversary of their light and creative power--Python against Apollo. As the power of the earth against the air, the giants are serpent-bodied in the Gigantomachia; but as the power of the earth upon the seed--consuming it into new life ('that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die')--serpents sustain the chariot of the spirit of agriculture.

Yet, on the other hand, there is a power in the earth to take away corruption, and to purify, (hence the very fact of burial, and many uses of earth, only lately known); and in this sense, the serpent is a healing spirit,--the representative of Aesculapius, and of Hygieia;

50

The burial of the dead at Marius's home Whitenights is consecrated with many rites of continuing affection and care, but the decay of the body is too evident. To escape death in this way, Marius must experience a different cult, and exchange his idea of snakes as evil and death-ridden for a recognition of their healing powers. There is a dialectic, similar to Marius's continual inner dialogue, between these two local religions and their differing attitudes towards death.

The cult of Aesculapius leads Marius out of his secure home for the first time, showing him the direction of greater experience, and hence of a less circumscribed attitude towards death. Before he leaves the temple, he is shown a view through a window:

It was like the vision of a new world, by the opening of an unsuspected window in some familiar dwelling-place. He looked out upon a long-drawn valley, of a most cheerful aspect, hidden, by the

50 "The Queen of the Air", The Works, Vol. 19, pp. 363-4.

peculiar conformation of the locality, from all points of observation but this. In a green meadow at the foot of the olive-clad rocks just below, the novices were taking their exercise. The sides of the vale lay both alike in full sun-light; and its distant opening was closed by a beautifully formed mountain, from which the last wreaths of morning mist were rising under the heat. It was the very presentment of a land of hope; its hollows brimful of a shadow of blue flowers; and lo! on the one level space of the horizon, in a long dark line, were towers and a dome: and that was Pisa--Or Rome, was it? asked Marius, ready to believe the utmost, in his excitement. (p. 43)

The view can only be seen from this place, and Marius feels the same rush of release as Florian experiences when he sees the hawthorn escaping over the garden wall. In the distance is Pisa, the first city where Marius is to learn about art: Pisa is like London, the centre of experience portrayed in "An English Poet" and "Charles Lamb".

Marius's experience of Epicureanism is structured in a similarly dialectic way, reflecting the dialogue within Marius. Once again it is prompted by the imperative of coming to terms with death. Flavian dies of a plague which creates corruption in the body before death. Marius, the spectator of Flavian's last days, is thereby forced to include the certainty of physical corruption in his idea of death. In the contrast between the religion of Numa and the cult of Aesculapius, the serpent temporarily becomes a positive symbol of healing: here, however, Marius must find a philosophy which will include and render insignificant the undeniable fact of corruption. This has been made more pressing by the last day that Marius and Flavian spend together before Flavian falls ill. They sail to the site of a former Greek colony and muse on the nature of Greek life:

The life of those vanished townsmen, so brilliant and revolutionary, applying so abundantly the personal qualities which alone just then Marius seemed to value, associated itself with the actual figure of his companion, standing there before him, his face enthusiastic with the sudden thought of all that; and struck him vividly as what would have been precisely the fitting opportunity for a nature like his, so hungry for control, for personal ascendancy, over men. (p. 118)

Flavian comes to represent for Marius the clarity of the Hellenic ideal, and the fact that he succumbs to the plague points up the struggle between Hellenic containment and "modern" dissolution. This familiar contrast creates the strictly defined "Epicureanism" which Marius takes with him as an attitude of mind when he travels to Rome. Pater suggests that, like the child's security in his home, Epicureanism is not an end in itself but a basis from which truth, creativity and completeness can originate. Marius must go to Rome to continue his dialogue with himself.⁵¹

The Stoicism which Marius encounters in Rome marks the beginning of Pater's extensive borrowing from contemporary sources. His previous use of the story of Cupid and Psyche and of the Pervigilium Veneris in Book I, is as symbolic reflections of certain themes in the book. But when he quotes from the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius and the Discourse on the "Nature of Morals" by Marcus Cornelius Fronto, he uses them in a different way: to oppose their philosophy to the questing attitude of mind which Marius has adopted. A dialectic is conducted between Epicureanism and Stoicism, first of all in the juxtaposition of quoted extracts with the narrator's comments, and secondly within Marius himself. For example, when Marius attends the discourse given by Cornelius Fronto on the Nature of Morals (Book III, Chapter 16), he begins to question his own philosophy in the light of Fronto's words, as well as questioning Fronto's ideas against his own tendencies of thought:

Fronto's discourse, with its wide prospect over the human, the spiritual, horizon, had set him on a review--on a review of the isolating narrowness, in particular, of his own theoretic scheme . . . he remained behind in Rome; anxious to try the lastingness

⁵¹ Throughout Marius Pater uses the journeys which Marius makes to symbolize the development and consolidation of his thought through the landscape he sees: the trip to Rome therefore signifies an exploration.

of his own Epicurean rose-garden; setting to work over again, and deliberately passing from point to point of that old argument with himself, down to its practical conclusions. That age and our own have much in common--many difficulties and hopes. Let the reader pardon me if here and there I seem to be passing from Marius to his modern representatives--from Rome, to Paris or London.

What really were its claims as a theory of feeling and practice?

And we may note, as Marius could hardly have done, that that new Cyrenaicism of his is ever the characteristic philosophy of youth--ardent, but narrow in its survey; sincere, but apt to be one-sided, and even fanatical. 52

This is the most explicit comparison of the second century AD with the nineteenth century in the whole book. The vision of Marius which Pater leaves us with as we move to a discussion of nineteenth-century philosophy is precisely of "the doubts, . . . the discouragement, of Hamlet and Faust" that Matthew Arnold declines for art. At this crisis of Marius's philosophy, Pater once again poses the problem of death, and here it performs a positive role: its part in the Stoic philosophy returns Marius to Epicureanism. Marcus Aurelius lacks human sympathy at the gladiators' fights; if this were not a sufficient indictment of Stoicism, he is unable to fulfil the tenets of his philosophy when his own child dies, and betrays his distress. Stoicism cannot comfort in the face of death.

The final crisis for Marius is when he encounters Christianity. In this section again there exists a dialectic between the quoted sources and the authorial comment. Chapter 26, "Ah! Voilà les âmes qu'il falloir à la mienne!" (Rousseau), is partly taken from Eusebius's Epistle of the

⁵² Vol. II, pp. 15, 16. The last paragraph of this passage underwent some interesting revisions later, which temper the condemnation of Cyrenaicism:

And we may note, as Marius could hardly have done, that Cyrenaicism is ever the characteristic philosophy of youth, ardent, but narrow in its survey--sincere, but apt to become one-sided, or even fanatical. (Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas, 2 vols., London: Macmillan, 1898, Vol. II, pp. 11-12).

Churches of Lyons and Vienne, and descriptions of the courage shown by Blandina again pose the problem of death. Until then Marius has been increasingly drawn towards Christianity. He attends the funeral of a child:

Dead children, children's graves--Marius had been always half aware of an old superstitious fancy in his mind concerning them; as if in coming near them he came near the failure of some lately-born hope or purpose of his own. And now, perusing intently the expression with which Cecilia bent upon all this, and returned afterwards to the house, he felt that he too had had to-day his funeral of a little child. (p. 208)

While the actual funeral is touching in the "kind of exultation and joy" that the mourners can feel in the face of death, it symbolizes for Marius the burial of certain hopes concerning marriage with Cecilia. He takes a journey to examine once again his feelings, and finds that he regrets not marrying Cecilia:

he found a certain disappointment at his heart, greater than he could have anticipated; and as he passed over the crisp leaves, nipped off in multitudes by the first sudden cold of winter, he felt that the mental atmosphere within himself was perceptibly colder.

Yet it was, finally, a quite successful resignation which he achieved, on a review, after his manner, during that absence, of loss and gain. The image of Cecilia seemed already to have become like some matter of history or poetry, or a picture on the wall. (p. 209)

This regret which becomes a fairly successful resignation presages Marius's inability to commit himself to Christianity: commitment to Cecilia in marriage is a counterpart to commitment to Christianity through martyrdom. Marius is unable to do both. When he sacrifices himself so that Cornelius may escape and marry Cecilia, therefore, he is not eventually accepting the Christian attitude towards death, but dying for an ideal of human sympathy to which he has always been faithful. His actual death is less important than the fact that he allows another to commit himself fully in marriage, a man who has already proved himself capable of commitment to Christianity. The ending of Marius is ambiguous

because Marius's actual death, and the symbolism which death has carried throughout the book, are divorced at this crucial moment, allowing readers to imagine that Marius has finally opted for a philosophy which will render death unproblematic. On the contrary, Marius is once again rejecting the implications which a philosophy, this time Christianity, has for one's attitude towards death.

Marius's death is an unsatisfactory ending to a book that is long, and on its own terms can have no satisfactory ending. The quest for truth through an habitual self-questioning renders the questioner, the fully Romantic character, incapable of finding the truth: Marius can only define it negatively. In this sense, he is Socratic, for Pater says in Plato and Platonism:

Now the Sophist and the popular moralist, in that preliminary attempt to define the nature of Justice--what is right, are both alike trying, first in this formula, then in that, to occupy, by a thought, and by a definition which may convey that thought into the mind of another--to occupy, or cover, a certain area of the phenomena of experience, as the Just. And what happens thereupon is this, that by means of a certain kind of casuistry, by the allegation of certain possible cases of conduct, the whole of that supposed area of the Just is occupied by definitions of Injustice, from this centre or that. (p. 102)

The inclusive method of discovering the truth is therefore unsatisfactory; one cannot "occupy" an area without first defining it:

A method such as this, a process (processus) a movement of thought, which is the very converse of mathematical or demonstrative reasoning, and incapable therefore of conventional or scholastic form, of 'exactness', in fact; which proceeded to truth, not by the analysis and application of an axiom, but by a gradual suppression of error, of error in the form of partial or exaggerated truths on the subject-matter proposed, found its proper literary vehicle in a dialogue, the more flexible the better. (p. 163)

To approach the truth by suppressing error, instead of with an a priori assumption of what that truth is, first of all discards scientific reasoning and leads into Pater's emphasis on the imaginative apprehension of truth, and secondly leads to the dialogue form. In Marius, the central

character conducts an eternal dialogue with himself, and the structure of the novel is a series of similar dialectics. However, in Plato and Platonism Pater also comments many times on the absence of any final arrival at the truth:

Conversely to that absoluteness and necessity which Plato himself supposes in all real knowledge, as 'the spectacle of all time and all existence', it might seem that the only sort of truth attainable by his actual method, must be the truth of a particular time and place, for one and not for another. . . . every one of Plato's Dialogues is in essence such, like that whole life-long, endless dialogue which dialectic, in its largest scope, does but formulate, and in which truly the last, the infallible word, after all, never gets spoken. Our pilgrimage is meant indeed to end in nothing less than the vision of what we seek. But can we ever be quite sure that we are really come to that? By what sign or test? (p. 174)

In Book III, Chapter 19, Marius does experience an absolute truth, but "of a particular time and place". The chapter begins with Marius's musings on the power of the will to discover and hold the truth:

Experience certainly taught that, as with regard to the sensible world he could attend or not, almost at will, to this or that colour, this or that train of sounds, amid the whole tumult of sound and colour, so it was also, for a well-trained intelligence, in regard to the hum of voices which besiege the inward no less than the outward ear. Might it be not otherwise with those various and competing, permissible hypotheses, which, in that open field for hypotheses--one's own actual ignorance of the origin and tendency of our being--present themselves so importunately, some of them with so emphatic a reiteration, through all the mental changes of the various ages--present themselves as instinctive reflections of the facts of experience? Might the Will itself be an organ of knowledge, of vision? (II, 75)

On this day, Marius does succeed in uniting certainty and truth. The title of the chapter in its revised version shows this unity by bringing together the two opposing terms: "The Will as Vision".⁵³ Yet at the end, "Himself--his ideas and sensations--never fell again precisely into focus as on that day" (p. 82). Although in Plato and Platonism Pater

⁵³ In the first edition this chapter is entitled "Paratum Cor Meum, Deus!"

posits the "vision" of the truth as the end of the journey, in Marius he confirms that one can never be sure that it really is the end. As in "The Child in the House" the certainty is only perceived in retrospect, and the quester must continue his search:

would he be faithful to himself, to his own habits and leading suppositions, if he did but remain just there? Must not all the rest of his life be a seeking after the equivalent of that reasonable Ideal, among so-called actual things--a gathering up of every trace and note of it, here or there, which actual experience might present to him? (pp. 82-3)

Marius must search for every opportunity to embody his apprehension of the truth in sensuous form.

Marius the Epicurean is based on the fact that the journey never ends. Its ending is of necessity tentative and inconclusive. This uncertainty resembles the endings of "The Poetry of Michelangelo" and "Leonardo da Vinci", where the formally conclusive ending of death is endowed with curiosity and indefiniteness by Pater, and where past, present and future are brought together. Frank Kermode fittingly concludes his book with this comment:

Stevens talks about the moment out of poverty as 'an hour/Filled with expressible bliss, in which I have / No need'. But the hour passes; the need, our interest in our loss, returns; and out of another experience of chaos grows another form--a form in time--that satisfies both by being a repetition and by being new. (p. 180)

In Marius this is exacerbated by the fact that the moment does not occur at the end of the book. The essays in The Renaissance each cohere, also, because of the typification of the subjects as well as the enclosing form of biography; the portrayal of Marius does not create this unity. He is a "type", but a "type" of the completely modern, Romantic, "doubting" character. He lacks the clear outline, and he is deliberately contrasted with two other characters. Flavian is explicitly compared to Greek life; Cornelius, when Marius first meets him, is associated with armour, an

extreme symbol of containment:

Cornelius bethought himself of displaying to his new friend the various articles and ornaments of his knightly array--the breastplate, the sandals and cuirass, lacing them on, one by one, with the assistance of Marius, and finally the great golden bracelet on the right arm, conferred on him by his general for an act of valour. And as he gleamed there, amid that odd interchange of light and shade, with the staff of his silken standard fast in his hand, Marius felt as if he were looking, for the first time, on a new knighthood or chivalry, just then coming into the world. (Vol. I, p. 183)

The function of biography is ineffective at the end of Marius because of the confusion between the actual death of Marius and the symbolic "death" of Cornelius: Marius dies for human sympathy, and Cornelius for a particular philosophy and its attitude towards death. Consequently, the biography is not a natural narrative form as it is in "Leonardo da Vinci", because it does not impose meaning on Marius's life at the end through death.

The essays in The Renaissance express a preference for the imaginative apprehension of truth over scientific reasoning; imaginatively divined truth can give sensuous form to abstract thought, a fundament of the act of writing. When Pater turned to autobiography in "The Child in the House" he found a secure "beginning" for his own writing. Yet the endings of pieces of writing become problematic, for autobiography is a reflex of introspection and sympathy, which both evade strict containment. On a simple level, it cannot include death as a symbolic ending because the subject/author is still alive. "The Child in the House" ends on a note of expansion, with the child leaving his old home for new experience, but it is contained through nostalgia and the "framing device" which Pater uses. "An English Poet" continues to explore different "beginnings" but was significantly left unfinished. In Marius the Epicurean Pater

wishes to include a satisfactory "ending", death, within a narrative based on the introspective, quasi-autobiographical subject. The book is a series of confrontations between Marius and attitudes towards death. But the obfuscation of the relationship between the author and Marius prevents a "framing" from imposing coherence: the actual ending is arbitrary, and leaves neither an impression of expansion nor of symbolic comment on Marius's life. It suffers from a technical indeterminacy. Yet Pater's attitude towards history in this book foreshadows his intention in Imaginary Portraits. As Peter Allan Dale says,

Pater is attempting in this book imaginatively to embody his firm belief that there is no essential discontinuity between our consciousness in the present and the mind of the past. Accordingly, the study of the past is, in an important sense, a process of intense introspection, a process, as Marius puts it at one point, of 'retracing in One's individual mental pilgrimage the historic order of human thought'. 54

⁵⁴ The Victorian Critic and the Idea of History: Carlyle Arnold Pater (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 195.

CHAPTER IV

Imaginary Portraits: rewriting history

The exercise of a veracious imagination in historical picturing seems to be capable of a development that might help the judgement greatly with regard to present and future events. By veracious imagination, I mean the working out in detail of the various steps by which a political or social change was reached, using all extant evidence and supplying deficiencies by careful analogical creation. How triumphant opinions originally spread--how institutions arose--what were the conditions of great inventions, discoveries, or theoretic conceptions--what circumstances affecting individual lots are attendant on the decay of long-established systems,--all these grand elements of history require the illumination of special imaginative treatment . . . For want of such real, minute vision of how changes come about in the past, we fall into ridiculously inconsistent estimates of actual movements, condemning in the present what we belaud in the past, and pronouncing impossible processes that have been repeated again and again in the historical preparation of the very system under which we live.

George Eliot, "Historic Imagination", "Leaves from a Notebook", in Essays, ed. Thomas Pinney (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 446, 447.

i Mythology and Art

In the years between The Renaissance and Marius the Epicurean, Pater produced a number of pieces which moved towards autobiography and imaginative work: "On Wordsworth", "The Child in the House", "Charles Lamb", "An English Poet", and eventually, Marius. This was not the only work he produced. He also began to produce a series of essays on Greek mythology: "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone" (1875), "A Study of Dionysus" (1876), and "The Bacchanals of Euripides" (1878).¹ In February, March and April of 1880 he published three essays on Greek sculpture: "The Heroic Age of Greek Art" and "The Age of Graven Images", which came under the general title of "The Beginning of Greek Sculpture", and "The Marbles of Aegina".² In his introduction to the posthumous volume Greek Studies Charles Shadwell remarks on the connection between the two series:

The essays fall into two distinct groups, one dealing with the subjects of Greek mythology and Greek poetry, the other with the history of Greek sculpture and Greek architecture. But these two groups are not wholly distinct; they mutually illustrate one another, and serve to enforce Mr Pater's conception of the essential unity, in all its many-sidedness, of the Greek character. 3

It is the connection of mythology and art which forms the basis of Pater's writing in Imaginary Portraits.

In "Diaphaneité" and "Winckelmann" Pater likens the characters of both to Greek statuary, with their possession of "the clear ring, the eternal outline of the antique" (MS, p. 255; SHR, p. 150). In

¹ These were published respectively in the Fortnightly Review, XXV, Nos. CIX and CX, 82-95, 260-76, the Fortnightly Review, XXVI, No. CXX, 752-72, and Macmillan's Magazine LX, No. XXXLV, 63-72.

² These were all published in the Fortnightly Review, XXXIII, Nos. CLVIII (190-207), CLIX (422-34), and CLX (540-48) respectively.

³ Walter Pater, Greek Studies: A Series of Essays (London: Macmillan, 1895), pp. v-vi. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by GS.

"Winckelmann" he describes the great impersonality of Greek sculpture:

In it no member of the human form is more significant than the rest; the eye is wide, and without pupil; the lips and brow are not more precious than hands, and breasts, and feet. The very slightness of its material is part of its pride; it has no backgrounds, no sky or atmosphere, to suggest and interpret a train of feeling; a little of suggested motion, and much of pure light on its gleaming surfaces, with pure form--only these. And it gains more than it loses by this limitation to its own distinguishing motives; it unveils man in the repose of his unchanging characteristics. Its white light purged from the angry, blood-like stains of action and passion, reveals not what is accidental in man, but the god, as opposed to man's restless movement. (SHR, p. 185)

Pater "typifies" the geniusses of the Renaissance so that they become impersonal instances "of the laws by which certain aesthetic effects are produced" (p. 88). They do, therefore, reveal the god in man, the purest examples of creative ability; this is strengthened by their equation throughout The Renaissance with certain pagan gods whom Pater likes to imagine "in exile" in the Renaissance.⁴ The Hellenistic clarity of such "types" is the means by which the confused nineteenth century may learn from the past, rather than from "their analogues in all the mixed confused productions of the modern mind" (p. 88). In the cases of Michelangelo and Leonardo in particular, the "pure form" is employed to embody an incipient Romanticism, for The Renaissance constantly reaches out to comment on the nineteenth century: the past is used, is made to work, for the present. The book leads up to the apotheosis of Goethe, an example of the complete, because complex, man, who most represents the ideal for the nineteenth century.

The problems of beginning and ending, of a firm place and coherent

⁴ This is a reworking by Pater of the ideas in Heinrich Heine's "Gods in Exile", to be found in The Prose Writings of Heinrich Heine, ed. Havelock Ellis (London: Walter Scott, n.d.), pp. 268-89. See Chapter I, n. 28.

existence at a point in the continuum of history, are explored by Pater in "The Child in the House" and its related pieces. This is another aspect of the Hellenizing process whereby coherency is created by form; Pater has moved into a form of imaginative writing in order to find this coherency. In Imaginary Portraits the plastic effects of Greek sculpture and the natural beginnings of mythology are united in an imaginative reappraisal of history, where history is used, rewritten, for the service of the nineteenth century.

The relationship of myth to fiction is, of course, a large topic. John Dixon Hunt discusses some of the more general uses to which mythology was put by writers and artists in the nineteenth century, and says that it was a fund, comprising Arthurian romance and Scandinavian legend as well as Greek mythology, of "richly coloured images of a historical or legendary past that serve also as metaphors for the life of the human spirit".⁵ While Pater did use mythology as a fund of "clichés"--inevitably, as he also converted past writing into the same--his interest also took more specific forms. According to James Kissane,

Earlier generations either ridiculed myths as fictions or examined them for clues to hidden truths. Already they were beginning to be dissected into patterns of savage worship; but to such devoted amateurs as Ruskin and Pater they were above all a kind of natural art. ⁶

The trend was to regard myths as objects to "perceive" and not as phenomena to explain. As Kissane says, "[Mythology] was felt to possess, because of its organic and adaptable nature, an unbounded and enduring appeal" (p. 21). In his Greek Studies Pater often comments on the

⁵ The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination 1848-1900 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 34.

⁶ "Victorian Mythology", Victorian Studies, 6 (1962), 15.

development from mythology to art; but first of all he examines how the Greeks came to embody their consciousness of natural phenomena in human form. His analysis is not scientific or anthropological, but a celebration of poetical conception:

Dionysus, as we see him in art and poetry, is the projected expression of the ways and dreams of this primitive people, brooded over and harmonised by the energetic Greek imagination; the religious imagination of the Greeks being, precisely, a unifying or identifying power, bringing together things naturally asunder, making, as it were, for the human body a soul of waters, for the human soul a body of flowers; welding into something like the identity of a human personality the whole range of man's experiences of a given object, or series of objects--all their outward qualities, and the visible facts regarding them--all the hidden ordinances by which those facts and qualities hold of unseen forces, and have their roots in purely visionary places. (GS, pp. 22-3)

This plastic moulding power therefore creates a human personality which encompasses all the feelings about nature and existence, and it leads to the creation of an equivalent ideal human form. Thus Zeus, originally a "projected expression" of the open sky, when perfectly sculpted by Pheidias retains

the blandness, the breadth, the smile of the open sky; the mild heat of it still coming and going, in the face of the father of all the children of sunshine and shower; as if one of the great white clouds had composed itself into it, and looked down upon them thus, out of the midsummer noonday (pp. 24-5).

Simultaneously, Pater comments upon the imaginative creation of form, of personality, and upon the sensuous creation of form leading from that: the sculpture of the human being. He says,

The office of the imagination, then, in Greek sculpture, in its handling of divine persons, is thus to condense the impressions of natural things into human form; to retain that early mystical sense of water, or wind, or light, in the moulding of eye and brow; to arrest it, or rather, perhaps, to set it free, there as human expression. (pp. 26-7)

The body becomes intimately connected with earth and air.⁷

Pater then proceeds to emphasize the inevitable tension between "the sense of sun, or lightning, or cloud" (p. 28) and the controlling human form. The latter becomes predominant as Greek sculpture develops and is secularized:

The representation of Man, as he is or might be, became the aim of sculpture, and the achievement of this the subject of its whole history; one early carver had opened the eyes, another the lips, a third had given motion to the feet; in various ways, in spite of the retention of archaic idols, the genuine human expression had come, with the truthfulness of life itself. (p. 29)

This is the stage after the pure sculpture Pater praises in "Winckelmann". The "genuine human expression" here allows for the expression of Romantic, inner impulses. There is, however, in the sculpture of Pheidias and the drama of Aeschylus, according to Pater, a perfect fusion: "beautiful, perfectly understood human outlines, embodying a strange, delightful, lingering sense of clouds and water and sun" (p. 30). Greek culture therefore moves from the poetic conception of a human personality which comprehends all vague thoughts and feelings, to a god who represents them all; from this, sculpture evolves as men try to portray their god, and then men begin to concentrate on the purely human form and to represent man. Considering his concern for beginnings and his conviction that there is no true beginning in philosophy or

⁷ c.f. Ruskin, in "The Queen of the Air", p. 386:

[Air] enters into the surface of the earth, subdues it, and falls together with it into fruitful dust, from which can be moulded flesh; it joins itself, in dew, to the substance of adamant; and becomes the green leaf out of the dry ground; it enters into the separated shapes of the earth it has tempered, commands the ebb and flow of the current of their life, fills their limbs with its own lightness, measures their existence by its indwelling pulse, moulds upon their lips the words by which one soul can be known to another; is to them the hearing of the ear, and the beating of the heart; and, passing away, leaves them to the peace that hears and moves no more.

belief, Pater's interest in mythology evidently offers many parallels. The change from undefined sensations and feelings to a human personality helps him to form his characters in Imaginary Portraits, who represent intangible cultural movements and trends; the change from divine personality to human form helps him to secularize history. The close connection of god and man, on the other hand, also enables him to invest his "types" with a heroism deriving from their all-embracing natures. Lastly, the sensuous expression of poetic concepts in Greek sculpture causes him to turn towards "genre" art as a reflection of day-to-day life. Thus in Imaginary Portraits there are two strains to the presentation of the main characters: their spiritual representativeness, and the plastic effects of creating heroes modelled on the technique of Greek sculpture.

The title, Imaginary Portraits, suggests the two-fold nature of Pater's literary method in this book. With his customary finesse in using words, Pater uses the word "portraits" for three of its meanings. All were in current use at his time. The most general meaning is "a representation or delineation of a person, especially of the face, made from life, by drawing, painting, photography, engraving, etc.; a likeness".⁸ With this meaning Pater keeps before the reader the themes of visual art which run through the book. A second meaning forms a connecting connotation: "a verbal picture or representation; a graphic or vivid description". The third meaning expresses what Pater is doing in his writing here: "something that represents, typifies, or resembles something else; an image, representation, type; likeness, similitude". This chapter discusses Pater's use of the literary "type" in Imaginary Portraits; the following chapter discusses the effects of such a visual

⁸ These definitions are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary.

presentation.

ii The Type and History

There is, at all events, no sign in any of the Imaginary Portraits that Pater could have apprehended the risk the promiscuous essayist, aesthete or novelist runs, who hazards some deduction from an imperfect knowledge of historical fact. ⁹

This unfavourable and somewhat pedantic comment goes right to the heart of Pater's practice in Imaginary Portraits: he places a fictional character in an historical context. But he is not "promiscuous", nor is he irresponsible, in doing this; there are reasons for his practice.

Gerald Monsman says,

In Marius the Epicurean, the hero was wholly Pater's invention, but the other events and characters were mostly drawn from pre-existing sources. By mingling fact and fancy Pater seemingly desires to reveal the hidden figure in the historical tapestry--the existence of a personality expressive of the era, but never before portrayed. ¹⁰

The conjunction of these two sentences is misleading, because Marius is a wholly modern figure "deposited" by Pater in the second century AD, which results in a gap and a comparison between then and the nineteenth century; on the contrary, the four characters of Imaginary Portraits combine an inner life with the representation of a cultural phenomenon or milieu. They are truly the "hidden figures" in history. In The Renaissance Pater moves easily and with no tension between two meanings of the word "genius":

The question he asks is always, In whom did the stir, the genius, the sentiment of the period find itself? Who was the receptacle of its

⁹ A. Van de Put, Walter Pater and the Rosenmold Pedigree (Lingard Papers, n.s. 17, 1934), p. 5.

¹⁰ Walter Pater, pp. 128-9.

refinement, its elevation, its taste? 'The ages are all equal', says William Blake, 'but genius is always above its age'.

Often it will require great nicety to disengage this virtue from the commoner elements with which it may be found in combination.
(p. x)

The first reference to genius here is to the spirit of the age. The quotation from Blake refers to the conception of genius as an outstanding, almost god-given ability. Pater then reverts to the first meaning with the word "virtue" meaning here the spirit, but which, with its frequent association with herbs, also suggests special ability.¹¹ In The Renaissance the artists whom Pater discusses can be regarded as geniuses in their outstanding abilities, and he regards them both as such and as spirits of their age. In Imaginary Portraits the heroes are completely "types", quintessences of the age in which they live.

If we imagine a sliding scale from historical fact to fiction, the heroes occupy places on it which range from the almost historical to the virtually fictional. Watteau really existed, but the character of the diarist is invented; Sebastian is made to resemble Spinoza in his time, situation and philosophy; Duke Carl resembles Winckelmann in more general ways; Denys is a fictional character but based on the less fictional, because mythical, Dionysus. As the character becomes more fictional, his actions become more effective in his times, because being a purer distillation of his temporal currents, he becomes more accurately the agent of change.

The relationship between fact and fiction is constantly debated when biography is the topic. Not surprisingly, "A Prince of Court Painters" is sometimes read as biography, and indeed it is the link between the

¹¹ See the definitions of the word "Genius" given in the Oxford English Dictionary

essays in The Renaissance and the later portraits. Writing in 1897, Charles Whibley says that biography is subject to many abuses, such as curiosity and the desire for scandal. Nevertheless, it is "the most delicate of the arts", and "the definition is difficult, because it must be framed with an equal regard to art and to behaviour". Truth is a shifting concept. The "aesthetic aim of biography . . . is portraiture with a retrospect".¹² This is a necessity caused by selection and interpretation, authorial responsibilities which raise biography to the status of literature. He goes on to say,

the biographer's first necessity is invention rather than knowledge. If he would make a finished portrait of a great man, he must treat him as he would treat the hero of a romance; he must imagine the style and habit wherein he lived. He must fill in a thousand blanks from an intuitive sympathy; should he use documents in his study he must suppress them in his work, or pass them by with a hint; thus only will he arrive at a consistent picture, and if he start from an intelligent point of view he is at least likely to approach the truth.

The elements of portraiture, "intuitive sympathy" and subdued documentation are all relevant to Pater, and just how relevant becomes clear when

Whibley continues:

A quick understanding may divine what a thousand unpublished letters would only obscure. When Mr Pater drew his imaginary portrait of Watteau he excluded from the perfected work all the sketches and experiments which had aided its composition. There was no parade of knowledge or research, and such research as discovered the quality of the artist was held severely in reserve. This, then, is the ideal of biography: an imagined portrait stripped of all that is unessential, into which no detail is introduced without a deliberate choice and a definite intention.

Of course, Whibley has picked upon the one example of Pater's work which calls itself an "imaginary portrait" yet is consciously and admittedly based upon a real person. Yet while Whibley enfolds inventiveness within the limits of biography, Henry James reverses the equation. The use of

¹² "The Limits of Biography", The Nineteenth Century (March 1897), pp. 428-36.

a "type" as a fictional character is a major concern in his "Prefaces". He frequently admits to basing a character on a famous person and to rejecting the facts which would overload and overdetermine his own conception. In his "Preface" to "The Aspern Papers" he describes how he heard that Jane Clairmont, related by marriage to Shelley and the mother of Byron's daughter Allegra, had been alive in Florence until very recently. The reasons for his relief at not being able to visit her are recounted at length:

I had luckily not had to deal with the difficult option; difficult in such a case by reason of that odd law which somehow always makes the minimum of valid suggestion serve the man of imagination better than the maximum. The historian, essentially, wants more documents than he can really use; the dramatist only wants more liberties than he can really take. 13

These are precisely Pater's reasons for rejecting documentation in favour of "imaginative truth". Even though he uses many historical facts in "A Prince of Court Painters", they are "held severely in reserve", as Whibley says. Henry James is fond of informing us of the precise moment of conception of many of his stories, and this concern for the beginning is evidently relevant to Pater. James would take an incident that really happened, for instance, and from that evolve a fictional "type"; Pater thrives on historical moments as the origin of his stories, and then evolves a representative "type" of that moment.

However, James's determined escape from the facts of many true stories told to him--he frequently recounts how he closed his mind to the speaker after the first seeds had caught his imagination--is only one aspect of his use of the "type". In his description of "The Coxon Fund" he reveals

¹³ The Art of the Novel, ed. R.P. Blackmur (New York: Scribner, 1934), pp. 161-2. Subsequent page references will be included in the text.

how he used sources in the same way as Pater:

The subject of 'The Coxon Fund', published in 'The Yellow Book' in 1894, had long been with me, but was, beyond doubt, to have found its interest clinched by my perusal, shortly before the above date, of Mr J Dyke Campbell's admirable monograph on S.T. Coleridge. The wondrous figure of that genius had long haunted me, and circumstances into which I needn't here enter had within a few years contributed much to making it vivid. Yet it's none the less true that the Frank Saltram of 'The Coxon Fund' pretends to be of his great suggester no more than a dim reflexion and above all a free rearrangement. More interesting still than the man--for the dramatist at any rate--is the S.T. Coleridge type; so what I was to do was merely to recognise the type, to borrow it, to re-embody and freshly place it; an ideal under the law of which I could but cultivate a free hand. (pp. 229-30)

The occasion of this "Preface" leads James to speculate on the possibilities of transferring a "real person", untypified, into a fiction. He rejects it as impossible, because "we can surely account for nothing in the novelist's work that hasn't passed through the crucible of his imagination" (p. 230). If the character persists in being identifiable as a real person, it is failure on the part of the novelist: "if it persists as the impression not artistically dealt with, it shames the honour offered it and can only be spoken of as having ceased to be a thing of fact and yet not become a thing of truth" (pp. 230-1).

James, then, emphasizes the freedom of the novelist and the usefulness of biography to provide the "type" which can then be used for fictional purposes. To take a "real person", and to place him, transformed, in a fiction, is very similar to quoting from another work of art in one's own book: Thomas Mann's problem. In Imaginary Portraits Pater "quotes" people from history in order to rewrite history. It is this creative attitude towards history that prompts the criticism that he misuses it in a "promiscuous" way. But he has a reason.

Frank Kermode says that the nineteenth century saw a "quite sudden

and enormous lengthening of the scale of history".¹⁴ It was the beginning of a time when the relationship between beginning and end became far more tenuous than hitherto, and this had repercussions for literature. Once the "end" is removed, "eschatology is stretched over the whole of history, the End is present at every moment, the types always relevant" (p. 26). There is a desire to use the past, to replace the binding effects of authority and tradition with history, which becomes a "fictive substitute" (p. 56). When adopted in this way, history is therefore "a maker of concords between past, present and future, a provider of significance to mere chronicity" (p. 56). In Imaginary Portraits the periods chosen appear arbitrary at first: "A Prince of Court Painters" takes place between 1701 and 1721; "Denys l'Auxerrois" is set in the thirteenth century; "Sebastian van Storck" occurs in the middle of the seventeenth century; "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" retreats from the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the introduction, to a story of the early eighteenth century. But they are moments when Pater wishes to create beginnings and ends. Hegel's cyclic conception of history helps this, so that, in Frank Kermode's words,

Historical events might be unique, and given pattern by an end; yet there are perpetuities which defy both the uniqueness and the end. . . . the entire cycle of created life, with its perpetuation of specific forms, had the same kind of eternity within a non-eternal world. (p. 74)

This way of viewing history fulfils Pater's desire for diversity and restraint, for, therefore, "eternity" and repetition. Just as his use of biography moves inexorably towards imaginative writing, so his attitude towards history becomes more and more that it is there to be used--and eventually recreated. As Peter Dale says,

¹⁴ op. cit., pp. 166-7.

Only in Pater does one find the adoption of a complete historicism. However, his position was so conscientiously skeptical and so highly colored by aestheticism that one might almost miss in him what is, in fact, a very significant shift from history as variety of knowledge to history as complete knowledge. 15

All four heroes live in ages portrayed as times of transition, when things are simultaneously ending and beginning. Pater's quotation of Watteau, Spinoza, Winckelmann and Dionysus moulds fact into fiction, creating an "imaginative truth" of history, especially for the benefit of his confused modern times.

However, it is the more "fictional" characters who have the greatest effect on their ages, embodying a wind of change in their times. Henry James also creates characters who intrude upon "real" life, although in a minor way. Several times in the "Prefaces" he mentions the objection of a friend:

the challenge of one's right, in any pretended show of social realities, to attach to the image of a 'public character', a supposed particular celebrity, a range of interest, of intrinsic distinction, greater than any such display of importance on the part of eminent members of the class as we see them about us. (p. 91)

It is a topic he refers to excitedly, telling us to wait until he is ready to discuss it at length. In the "Preface" to "The Lesson of the Master" he reproduces the "whole passion" of his reply:

What does your contention of non-existent conscious exposures, in the midst of all the stupidity and vulgarity and hypocrisy, imply but that we have been, nationally, so to speak, graced with no instance of recorded sensibility fine enough to react against these things?--an admission too distressing. What one would accordingly fain do is to baffle any such calamity, to create the record, in default of any other enjoyment of it; to imagine, in a word, the honourable, the producible case. What better example than this of the high and helpful public and, as it were, civic use of the imagination?--a faculty for the possible fine employments of which in the interest of morality my esteem grows every hour I live. . . . I have had, I admit, to project signal specimens--have had, naturally to make and to keep my cases interesting; the only way to achieve

¹⁵ op. cit., p. 8.

which was to suppose and to represent them eminent. (pp. 222-3)

James therefore sees one of the roles of the imagination as rewriting history in order to show people acting against the prevailing petty-mindedness of the time about which he is writing. There is an implicit effect of this procedure on the reader's present: hence James's emphasis on morality. James's tales of famous people struggling against their times are "records", "specimens"; they are "helpful", because they are examples for the aid of the present times. Similarly, when there is no historical character to "quote", Pater creates an ideal personage who explains the development from old to new.

As the comparison with Henry James's theories shows, Pater's methods of characterization are not as idiosyncratic as might be supposed. In fact, a survey of criticism on the novel in the second half of the nineteenth century confirms that Pater was working in a creative milieu where characterization was treated in diverse ways.¹⁶ Most novelists in the nineteenth century moved towards realism as a mode of representation, and their characters were often accordingly "life-like". Kenneth Graham comments, "Truth to human nature is one of the most widespread and durable critical principles of the age" (p. 22). However, in the critical articles and reviews published in periodicals, a debate developed about the relative claims of realism and "idealism". Many critics of the time felt that the novel was enslaved by facts in its espousal of "drab" realism. And a few authors, such as Hardy and Meredith, saw their goals in transcendental terms. To Hardy, fiction, like all art was something higher than life, "more true, so to put it, than nature or history can

¹⁶ Kenneth Graham, English Criticism of the Novel 1865-1900 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965).

be".¹⁷ One aspect of such idealist authors' quest for the universal was their use of "type-characters". Reviewers would excuse this mode of characterization by saying that they were, for example, characters made typical and at the same time "individual". We may remember Meredith's eponymous hero in The Egoist. Eustacia Vye in Hardy's The Return of the Native is also a "type-character"; in fact, she resembles the description of the Mona Lisa in "Leonardo da Vinci".¹⁸ Pater wishes to divine truth imaginatively, through legend and image. Similarly, the idealist novelists were opposed to Zola's scientific realism.

There is evidence in "An English Poet" that Pater was familiar with the writings of Hawthorne:

There was the novelist with whom one lived in delicately haunted old New England mansions and Tuscan castles, country houses, yet far above the real America, or Italy, Apennine Tuscany even. (p. 443)

Pater immediately picks out the idealist rendering of America and Italy; fittingly, Hawthorne was very popular in the 1860s and 1870s precisely because he was considered to use the romance to reconcile realism and idealism, "to attain the long-sought compromise".¹⁹ In 1887, significantly the year in which Imaginary Portraits was published, the romance suddenly became accepted by readers and critics, and there was an influx of articles

¹⁷ Quoted in Graham, p. 39.

¹⁸ For example:

She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries, and their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. . . . Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters and the march in 'Athalie'; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola.

(Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native, London: Macmillan, 1974, Book First, Chapter 7).

¹⁹ Graham, pp. 62-7.

about it.²⁰

In 1868 a reviewer in the Contemporary decided that just as history is said to be philosophy teaching through example, so the novel teaches by even higher examples, for instance through portrayal of the higher type. However, there was a resistance in some quarters to what was seen as a growing didacticism, and the "type-character" came under attack for causing "unnaturalness". The Pall Mall Gazette published a review, "Dr. MacDonald's New Novel", in which the comment was made:

They are not personages, but merely, like the figures on the slides of a magic-lantern, illustrations of the author's lecture. They come like shadows, and so depart. And it is much the same with the story. It moves in a shifting, intermittent way, and in a series of crude pictures, one pausing before us till it has served the lecturer's purpose, and then shifted to make room for another. 21

This is exactly how R.T. Leneghan describes Pater's narrative technique.²²

The discussion of the relative merits of realism and idealism, the methods used to express "higher truths", and the resulting critical philosophy and condemnation, are all familiar to readers of Pater. He was working in ways very similar to many novelists of the period. Yet we never hear him spoken of in the same breath as Hardy, Meredith, Hawthorne or James. The distinction lies in the length of Pater's successful pieces. Marius fails, ultimately. But Imaginary Portraits uses the "type-character" for very specific reasons. The goal Pater held out for his imaginary portraits was "Imag:--and port^s, they present,

²⁰ Graham, p. 66, says "In many ways 1887 is the year of recognition for the new romance: Saintsbury, Rider Haggard and Andrew Lang all issue manifestoes on its behalf."

²¹ Pall Mall Gazette, XXXVI (28 October 1882), 4-5.

²² "Pattern in Walter Pater's Fiction", discussed in Chapter III.

not an action, a story: but a char--personality, revealed, especially, in outward detail."²³ There is therefore no intention of narrative.

Pater presents characters like Greek statues who express their society and cultural surroundings--but who also change that society.

Critics almost invariably comment on the fact that all Pater's heroes die:

Death closes, unreasonably and almost casually, the career of every subject of the Imaginary Portraits--usually in such a fashion as to leave the real question, the success or failure of the individual life, finally unanswerable. It is the one chance, he realised acutely, with which every life, however comely or secure or rational, must deal. The sheer fact of death--death the intruder, death the breaker of patterns--was, I think, one of the great shaping ideas in the depths of Pater's mind. ²⁴

However, the "real question" is not, as Millhauser here suggests, "the success or failure of the individual life"; Pater was not interested in the specific, but in the typical, the social. Watteau, Duke Carl and Sebastian are individuals, but they are so because they embody Romantic impulses. Their deaths are not personal disasters, but instruments in the historical patterns that Pater is creating for the sake of coherency. Millhauser captures this:

this comes to seem reasonable and appropriate when we conceive of Pater's intention as not narrative at all (the sketches and Imaginary Portraits are hardly ever thought of, naïvely, as 'stories') but as the statement, for philosophical purposes, of an experience clearly conceived but not intuitively grasped. (p. 219)

The question of whether Pater's heroes fail suggests that their deaths are arbitrary, abrupt halts. Indeed, they do all die in youth, and this cannot be disregarded, but in Pater's view this alone does not constitute

²³ Quoted in d'Hangest, II, 45. This comment was found on a slip of paper accompanying the unpublished manuscript of Gaston, but d'Hangest thinks that it refers to Imaginary Portraits.

²⁴ Milton Millhauser, "Walter Pater and the Flux", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XI (1953), 215.

failure or lack of fulfilment. We may remember his regret that Botticelli did not die earlier, when his life-work was complete and he appears to have fulfilled himself. Indubitably, the task of facing an inopportune death, often violent and at the moment of greatest promise, does play a part in the organization of Pater's stories; but in the organization of Pater's "portraits" it has a summarizing effect. In both The Renaissance and Imaginary Portraits Pater uses the biography as a literary framework. But while it is a natural form of narrative framework in The Renaissance, in Imaginary Portraits it functions because of its beginnings and ends: it reflects the transitional periods in which the heroes all live.

In Beginnings Edward Said says, with reference to what he sees as a shift in attitudes towards history at the end of the nineteenth century,

Those modern thinkers (we most profitably think of them now as a sort of group) who are most responsible for banishing beginnings by reshaping knowledge into vast, impersonal unities and discontinuities were also passionate radicals, minds bent on discovering beginnings. Think of Darwin's Origin of Species, Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy and Genealogy of Morals; think also of the metaphors involving the concept of 'depth' and of the disputatious radicalism in Marx and Freud. What is interesting here is a transformation that takes place in the conception of beginnings, and this transformation is congruent with the change taking place throughout the creative disciplines. Satisfying the appetite for beginnings now requires, not beginning as event, but beginning as either type or force--for example, the unconscious, Dionysus, class and capital, or natural selection. These beginnings perform the task of differentiation which makes possible the same characteristic histories, structures, and knowledge that they intend. 25

This comment suggests that Pater's use of the "type" and of the "force", say, of mythology is a part of this movement to discover beginnings at the moment of abolishing the received historical beginnings. From this analysis, the role of Imaginary Portraits in the nineteenth century

²⁵ Beginnings, p. 51.

becomes clearer. All four portraits show heroes who are at odds with the society in which they live. Their innovations are abrupt, but must have a relationship with the past: all four portraits explore the role of the past in creative originality. Looking at them from Pater's nineteenth-century perspective, therefore, they are themselves examples from the past, of the past which plays a part in the present. The very form of Pater's portraits creates by its ambition the possibility of rewriting history: the framing device diverts the reader continually from the "tale" to the nineteenth century. Jan B. Gordon touches upon this when he says:

Habitually, each of the Imaginary Portraits commences with a mood of passive reflection, corresponding to the mental condition of the preconscious child. Increasingly the language is tortured into a density and concretion through infinite subordination. And almost miraculously each of the stories concludes with a return to passivity, more often than not intensified by the transference to an omniscient narrator. Sentences shorten and shift from interior monologues to the quiet reflections of an observing, not a participating voice. 26

The movement from passivity to action and back to passivity is the movement between present and past. Likewise, Pater's narrative positions in the portraits echo and use previous writing. The beginnings of each portrait differ from each other and from the writing they self-consciously echo: "A Prince of Court Painters" starts in medias res, with a female narrator writing a diary; "Denys l'Auxerrois" begins with Ruskinian exposition and the persona of an enthusiastic tourist scholar; "Sebastian van Storck" begins with a more conventional description in the style of art criticism; "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" in the voice of the historian. Edward Said says:

²⁶ "The Imaginary Portraits: Walter Pater's Aesthetic Pilgrimage", *University Review* (Kansas City), XXXV (1968), 35.

The necessary creation of authority for a beginning is also reflected in the act of achieving discontinuity and transfer: while in this act a clear break with the past is discernible, it must also connect the new direction not so much with a wholly unique venture but with the established authority of a parallel venture. (p. 33)

Pater's analysis of the present is given a firm base by "established authorities of parallel ventures": his portraits.

iii "A Prince of Court Painters"

The first story in Imaginary Portraits takes the reader back to the year 1701. There is no explicit perspective between then and the nineteenth century, for the narrator is here, exceptionally in Pater's stories, a young woman writing her diary. This is Pater's most ambitious attempt to rewrite history by inserting into the continuum of history another document or testimony. At the same time, in writing a record of what has happened, in episodes, and by making generalizations about her observations at certain points, the narrator is creating history--one very different from the usual documents, for it is coloured by her own feelings. This is Pater's ideal of imaginative truth taken to its logical conclusion: a completely fictional account which claims for itself the status of historical fact. The narrator stands in Pater's own position to all his writing. Significantly, the "beginning" which Pater found from which to create such an autonomous piece of writing, uncoloured by his own presence, lies in his personal ancestry. The young woman is in fact Marie-Marguerite Pater, born in 1690; Pater once replied, when asked by Arthur Symonds if there was any family connection, "I think so; I believe so; I always say so".²⁷ As in "The Child in the House" Pater

²⁷ A Study of Walter Pater, p. 104.

draws material from an unspoiled, because purely personal, heritage. The narrator is important, then, because she adopts the appraising role which Pater elsewhere reserves for himself. This role is made more noticeable by the diary form, and "A Prince of Court Painters" is as much about writing as about Watteau.²⁸

Watteau created a new kind of painting. His childhood and adolescence in Valenciennes endow him with a native fastidiousness, yet he feels the paucity of beauty there, and dreams of an ideal life in Paris. But when he reaches Paris, he comes increasingly to understand, and hence to despise, its superficiality:

He will never overcome his early training; and these light things will possess for him always a kind of worth, as characterising that impossible or forbidden world which the mason's boy saw through the closed gateways of the enchanted garden. Those trifling and petty graces, the insignia to him of that nobler world of aspiration and idea, even now that he is aware, as I conceive, of their true littleness, bring back to him, by the power of association, all the old magical exhilaration of his dream--his dream of a better world than the real one. (IP, pp. 36-7)

Trapped between an unsatisfactory past and an unfulfilled ideal, Watteau's paintings are ephemeral. Watteau is therefore an example of the innovator who does not have the resources to change the direction of art permanently. "A Prince of Court Painters" is about the value of the past in the necessarily resistant move towards the new.

²⁸ Some critics misunderstand this portrait so thoroughly that they cannot include it in their analyses. For example, in "Change and Suffering in Pater's Fictional Heroes", Modern Fiction Studies, XIII (1967-8), 443-53, F.E. Court says:

I have not included a discussion of Watteau, the protagonist of 'A Prince of Court Painters', because I believe that his portrait is obscured due to the intrusion of the narrator's limited point of view (the same is not true of 'Denys l'Auxerrois' which also has a first person narrator).

Watteau and the narrator are seen against the background of Valenciennes, where they have both grown up. Valenciennes has a long and mixed past, mentioned several times in the story. It has the remnants of a Spanish invasion; more recently, it has been Flemish; now it is French. Its history, achieved and finished, is rich, and the town is represented as an embodiment of a more general past, settled and tranquil. Yet there are hints of political turbulence. It is a stage across which armies march, "those weary soldiers, coming and going so interminably, one hardly knows whether to or from battle with the English and the Austrians, from victory or defeat!" (pp. 4-5). The soldiers only disturb the silence of a rainy day as much as "the creaking of a restless shutter on its hinges" (p. 4), but they indicate the confusion and vagueness of the present which has not yet become history. Watteau brings more disturbance to Valenciennes. The opening sentence, with its brevity and impersonal subject, signifies the abruptness of change: "They have been renovating my father's large workroom" (p. 1), and Watteau is connected with this intrusive novelty for his father is supervising the masonry. In contrast, the second sentence expands into description of what the workroom used to be like:

That delightful, tumble-down old place has lost its moss-grown tiles and the green weather-stains we have known all our lives on the high whitewashed wall, opposite which we sit, in the little sculptor's yard, for the coolness, in summertime. (p. 1)

The old Valenciennes becomes history, and therefore describable, expressible; Watteau's renovation, taking place in the present, is still only confused and undefined for the narrator.

"A Prince of Court Painters" portrays different ways of greeting this moment of change from old to new. The narrator's father resists it. The narrator herself expresses regret at the moment of losing the old and

familiar, yet in the process of writing about the loss, so that the lost becomes history, she accommodates herself to it and tentatively greets the new. She looks always for links with the past rather than dwelling on the break with tradition. Her diary entries also place Watteau's paintings and actions in the past regularly, and this helps her to reach some conclusions about his art. From describing the room that has been changed, she swiftly comments on the disadvantages of the old: "its grandiosity weighs a little on one's spirits" (p. 20), and then connects the new with the old: "in spite of its new-fashionedness, all this array is really less like a new thing than the last surviving result of all the more lightsome adornments of past times" (p. 21).

The narrator's sense of home is as developed as for any of Pater's characters. She pictures Watteau in Paris, relaxing in the Jardin du Luxembourg, with a telling image:

Methinks I see him there, when his long summer-day's work is over, enjoying the cool shade of the stately, broad-foliaged trees, each of which is a great courtier, though it has its way almost as if it belonged to that open and unbuilt country beyond, over which the sun is sinking. (pp. 7-8)

Here is that familiar conjunction of town and country, home and expansion. It is the ideal state for both the narrator and Watteau, but neither attains it. The narrator has secure roots in her home, and longs to explore beyond its limits, but cannot. She values the tranquillity of Valenciennes but in a resigned way:

It must be admitted that our Valenciennes is a quiet--nay, a sleepy place; sleepier than ever since it became French, and ceased to be so near the frontier. The grass is growing deep on our old ramparts, and it is pleasant to walk there--to walk there and muse; pleasant for a tame, unambitious soul such as mine. (p. 5)

When her brother goes to Paris to study under Watteau, she exclaims, "With how small a part of my whole life shall I be really living at Valenciennes!" (p. 16). Much later, when her longing for Watteau and

for escape, identical in her mind, have abated to melancholy, she says,

There are good things, attractive things, in life, meant for one and not for another--not meant perhaps for me; as there are pretty clothes which are not suitable for every one. I find a certain immobility of disposition in me, to quicken or interfere with which is like physical pain. He, so brilliant, petulant, mobile! (p. 29)

What has caused her to long for expansion is Watteau, and by implication, his new art. The tragedy is that she does not actually escape, but subsides into feeling only a great pity. She imagines, too, that Watteau has achieved this expansion, comparing his freedom to her own seclusion:

The bird, taken captive by the ill-luck of a moment, repeating its issueless circle till it expires within the close vaulting of that great stone church:--human life may be like that bird too!

Antony Watteau returned to Paris yesterday. Yes!--Certainly great heights of achievement would seem to lie before him,--access to regions where one may find it increasingly hard to follow him even in imagination, and figure to one's self after what manner his life moves therein. (p. 13)

But while Watteau has escaped from the constriction of Valenciennes, he has no true, fruitful heritage. His parents are unsympathetic and his old home has gone:

His father will hear nothing of educating him as a painter. Yet he is not ill-to-do, and has lately built himself a new stone house, big and gray and cold. Their old plastered house with the black timbers, in the Rue des Cardinaux, was prettier; dating from the time of the Spaniards, and one of the oldest in Valenciennes. (pp. 2-3)

Watteau's personal connection with the past has been severed, and only replaced with sterility. His "beginning" in art, his address to the renovation of the old, is therefore of necessity abrupt. Yet in an effort to maintain links with a past, he frequently returns to Valenciennes, seeking in the narrator's home the warmth and security lacking in his own. His first painting after he has settled in Paris is of a scene from Valenciennes, but of the confused present, and not of the past: it is "Un Départ de Troupes". His later paintings derive from his personal, deprived past as a recompense for what he missed in the way of fruitfulness:

He assures us, indeed, that this new style is in truth a thing of old days, of his own old days here in Valenciennes, when, working long hours as a mason's boy, he in fancy reclothed the walls of this or that house he was employed in, with this fairy arrangement. (pp. 21-2)

The lack of a home releases Watteau so that he can leave Valenciennes with no qualms, but means that he has to create his own, completely new beginnings. Hence his problematic relationship between the values of Valenciennes, which have bred in him a fastidiousness, and the superficiality of Paris, where he had dreamt of an ideal, yet finds only habits to be despised. With no proper home from which to expand or against which to rebel, Watteau lacks firm direction, and his restlessness develops during the story. It is echoed in his developing tuberculosis and in the temporariness of his art, which swiftly fades.

"A Prince of Court Painters" is tinged with melancholy. The narrator's concluding comment, when she has realized the disappointment of both her and Watteau's lives, is:

He has been a sick man all his life. He was always a seeker after something in the world, that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all. (p. 48)

This is true to the essential character of Watteau's paintings. E.H. Gombrich concludes a brief discussion of Watteau and his work with a similar connection between Watteau's physical illness and the melancholy of his paintings:

There is a touch of sadness in these visions of beauty which is difficult to describe or define, but which lifts Watteau's art beyond the sphere of mere skill and prettiness. Watteau was a sick man, who died of consumption at an early age. Perhaps it was his awareness of the transience of beauty which gave to his art that intensity which none of his many admirers and imitators could equal.

29

²⁹ The Story of Art (London: Phaidon, 11th ed., 1966), p. 342.

Gombrich suggests that the imminence of the end causes Watteau's sadness; on the contrary, Pater suggests that it was the unsatisfactory beginnings which made Watteau a "sick man all his life". It is, therefore, the sadness of his inability to connect the past with the future. If the narrator and he had been united, there would have been a unity and continuum. This is implicit in the story.³⁰ It is an ideal which Pater suggests by its absence. W.B. Yeats paid homage several times to Pater as a formative influence on his writing. His theory of cycles in time, expressed in A Vision, may not be directly attributable to Pater, but certain aspects are clearly relevant. The "Gyres", according to Frank Kermode,

are a figure of the co-existence of the past and the future at the time of transition. The old narrows to its apex, the new broadens towards its base, and the old and new interpenetrate. Where apex and base come together you have an age of very rapid transition. Actually, on Yeats's view of the historical cycle, there were transient moments of perfection, or what he called Unity of Being; but there was no way of making these permanent, and his philosophy of history is throughout transitional. (p. 100)

In "A Prince of Court Painters" there is no interpenetration of the old and the new.

However, the writing of the diary suggests a positive side to this melancholy tale. Each entry converts the immediately past--the recently present--into history which can be assimilated. This is important for Pater's interest in how the old becomes the new. The narrator begins by being a staunch adherent to tradition, and develops a tolerance and desire to understand Watteau's art through her love for him. Similarly, her brother is saved from being "a child of ten who cares only to save and possess, to hoard his tiny savings!" (p. 10), by his admiration for Watteau.

³⁰ cf. Monsman, Pater's Portraits, pp. 106-7.

Watteau has to die before he can be assimilated and accepted by the society of Valenciennes, and before the narrator can achieve a full appreciation of his art and influence. When he is fêted by the Syndics of the Academy of Saint Luke, sixteen months before his death, she senses the retrospective nature of such recognition:

There is something in the payment of great honours to the living which fills one with apprehension, especially when the recipient of them looks so like a dying man. God have mercy on him! (p. 45)

Whereas earlier she has said that it would have been better for Watteau not to have achieved his art in Paris but to have stayed at home, before his death she expresses an appreciation of the value of his endeavour:

For the rest, bodily exhaustion, perhaps, and this new interest in an old friend have brought him tranquillity at last, a tranquillity in which he is much occupied with matters of religion. Ah! it was ever so with me. And one lives also most reasonably so.--With women, at least, it is so, quite certainly. Yet I know not what there is of a pity which strikes deep, at the thought of a man, a while since so strong, turning his face to the wall from the things which most occupy men's lives. (p. 47)

The diary form unites the narrator and Watteau, uniting also the past of Valenciennes and the novelty of Watteau's art. It is an accomplished history of the transition, tracing the narrator's developing ideas about Watteau's art. By moving from entry to entry, we are able to assess the change from old to new at every stage, for each stage is presented as history; yet we are still experiencing the continuum while we are aware of the abruptness of change. In the diary form Pater has captured an age of transition as an entity. Watteau is the "type" of an innovator who extrudes from the flow of time, yet who is assimilated into it when he dies.

iv "Denys l'Auxerrois"

This portrait is based on the myth of Dionysus, the Greek god. Pater

had written "A Study of Dionysus" in 1876. The early piece is a preparation of the ground for the events that mark the stages of Denys's development.³¹ "Denys l'Auxerrois" is also about the point at the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, when

the rude strength of the middle age turns to sweetness; and the taste for sweetness generated there becomes the seed of the classical revival in it, prompting it constantly to seek after the springs of perfect sweetness in the Hellenic world. (SHR, pp. 2-3)

In the figure of Denys/Dionysus Pater has chosen the perfect "type": the human personality who in "A Study of Dionysus" he has traced being welded from "the whole range of man's experiences of a given object, or series of objects" (GS, p. 23); who therefore needs no persuasive writing to be transformed into a representative embodiment. The beginnings of Denys/Dionysus are perfect and pre-ordained for creative originality. They are totally unproblematic, deriving from natural phenomena yet with an exotic, because diverse, element.

Pater's portrait equally has an unproblematic origin, for it is based on myth. To Pater, and to other nineteenth-century writers such as Ruskin, mythology is fascinating because it expresses archetypal examples of temporal concatenations; it is a form of belief, and therefore, of imaginative truth. When Ruskin discusses the myth of Demeter, in "The Queen of the Air", he stresses that people once believed in her, that she was a form of religion--although he cannot conceal a reluctance to disregard the greater claims of Christianity:

We cannot justly interpret the religion of any people, unless we are prepared to admit that we ourselves, as well as they, are liable to error in matters of faith; and that the convictions of others,

³¹ Some critics base their entire interpretation of Pater's works on the evident influence of Dionysus (and Apollo) in some of the portraits. The most thorough example is Monsman, Pater's Portraits.

however singular, may in some points have been well founded, while our own, however reasonable, may in some particulars be mistaken. You must forgive me, therefore, for not always distinctively calling the creeds of the past, 'superstition', and the creeds of the present day, 'religion'; as well as for assuming that a faith now confessed may sometimes be superficial, and that a faith long forgotten may once have been sincere. . . . to deal with Greek religion honestly, you must at once understand that this literal belief was, in the mind of the general people, as deeply rooted as ours in the legends of our own sacred book; and that a basis of unmiraculous event was as little suspected, and an explanatory symbolism as rarely traced, by them, as by us. 32

Pater makes the same point: for the Greeks who lived and worked by the vineyards,

the thought of Dionysus and his circle, a little Olympus outside the greater, covered the whole of life, and was a complete religion, a sacred representation or interpretation of the whole human experience, modified by the special limitations, the special privileges of insight or suggestion, incident to their peculiar mode of existence. (GS, p. 10)

In an age when the eternal certitudes have dissolved for many, this emphasis on belief shows two things: a freedom from the solely Christian terms of reference, and an eagerness to explore other forms of belief. The myth solicits belief, first because it was the religion of the Ancients, and secondly because it is interpreted as an expression of fundamental phenomena.

The power of myth is indubitable. It is always taken as an expression of truth. Frank Kermode is anxious to define the relationship of myth to fiction:

32. op. cit., pp. 295-6, 298. Carlyle also stresses the belief, in the first lecture, "The Hero as Divinity", On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History, pp. 2-7. He says on p. 5, for example: We shall begin to have a chance of understanding Paganism, when we first admit that to its followers it was, at one time, earnestly true. Let us consider it very certain that men did believe in Paganism; men with open eyes, sound senses, men made altogether like ourselves; that we, had we been there, should have believed in it. Ask now, What Paganism could have been?

We have to distinguish between myths and fictions. Fictions can degenerate into myths whenever they are not consciously held to be fictive. In this sense anti-Semitism is a degenerate fiction, a myth; and Lear is a fiction. (p. 39)

We have come to distrust myth because of its close relationship with action, through belief. But before the horrors of the mythology of the Third Reich, myth was popular precisely because of this. To Pater myth is valuable for its power wholly to engage the reader's assent.

Denys is the old Classical world, which has been called up by the discovery of a flask, buried underneath the cathedral at Auxerre. He represents "that new, free, generous manner in art, active and potent as a living creature" (IP, p. 62). Like the flask, which brings back "no ineffable purity, but rather the riotous and earthy heat of old paganism itself" (p. 63), he brings release and abandon, political turmoil, and

The hot nights were noisy with swarming troops of dishevelled women and youths with red-stained limbs and faces, carrying their lighted torches over the vine-clad hills, or rushing down the streets, to the horror of timid watchers, towards the cool spaces by the river. (p. 69)

The vintages are outstanding; the artists are encouraged to new heights of expression; Denys creates the first organ. In "A Study of Dionysus" Pater comments that Renaissance art, with only one exception, portrays Dionysus as a joyful figure. He continues,

But modern motives are clearer; and in a Bacchus by a young Hebrew painter, in the exhibition of the Royal Academy of 1868, there was a complete and very fascinating realisation of such a motive; the god of the bitterness of wine, 'of things too sweet'; the sea-water of the Lesbian grape become somewhat brackish in the cup. 33

³³ Greek Studies, p. 37. I have been unable to identify this painting, although Alma-Tadema produced Vintage Festival in 1869, and William Blake Richmond exhibited Procession in Honour of Bacchus at the first Burlington House Academy in 1869.

His excavation of a subtler, melancholy Dionysus in Greek culture is an emphasis for the benefit of nineteenth-century man, and Dionysus comes to resemble Arnold's doubting man. The "sorrowing" Dionysus, as he calls him, "falls within the sphere of human chances" (p. 39); he changes from god to man, as Greek sculpture did. Simultaneously, in the story of Dionysus's marriage with Ariadne,

although the antiquarian may still detect circumstances which link the persons and incidents of the legend with the mystical life of the earth, as symbols of its annual change, yet the merely human interest of the story has prevailed over its earlier significance; the spiritual form of fire and dew has become a romantic lover. (p. 16)

Dionysus has changed from myth to fiction, a melancholy version appropriate for the nineteenth century. This is the aspect which appeals to Pater's times, and he cites Shelley's Sensitive Plant to indicate that the myth in this later, subtler form continues to have power.

In "Denys l'Auxerrois" the three stages which Denys goes through are equivalent to the stages of belief in a suffering Dionysus. Pater captures the "type" relevant to the nineteenth century by making Denys susceptible to influences of the Middle Ages, and therefore a complex, modified "type". As in The Renaissance, where the burgeoning of new thought is related to the mixed lights of the nineteenth century, here Pater analyses the mingling of Classicism and the medieval world which has gone to make up the culture of the nineteenth century. After the first stage, when Denys draws from the people, the vines, the artists, new fertility, he disappears for a while, and returns somewhat changed: "he ate flesh for the first time, tearing the hot, red morsels with his delicate fingers in a kind of wild greed" (IP, p. 73), and bringing an Eastern influence with him. He becomes an object of dread. This is the winter Dionysus:

the image of Dionysus Zagreus, the Hunter--of Dionysus in winter-- storming wildly on the dark Thracian hills, from which, like Ares and Boreas, he originally descends into Greece; the thought of the hunter concentrating into itself all men's forebodings over the departure of the year at its richest . . . This transformation, this image of the beautiful soft creatures become an enemy of human kind, putting off himself in his madness, wronged by his own fierce hunger and thirst, and haunting, with terrible sounds, the high Thracian farms, is the most tragic note of the whole picture. (GS, p. 42)

The mythical stages become the stages of assimilation of Denys by the middle ages, so that certain of his characteristics are rejected in favour of the better aspects of medieval culture:

People turned against their favourite, whose former charms must now be counted only as the fascinations of witchcraft. It was as if the wine poured out for them had soured in the cup. The golden age had indeed come back for a while:--golden was it, or gilded only, after all? (IP, p. 76)

In an effort to cure the winter of suffering and starvation which coincides with Denys's winter manifestation, the people turn to the wholly medieval remedy of exhuming a patron saint in the cathedral. The horror of this primitive ritual impels Denys into his third stage: it "seemed indeed to have cured the madness of Denys, but certainly did not restore his gaiety. He was left a subdued, silent, melancholy creature" (p. 79). He takes refuge in a monastery, where his power of action is considerably diminished, but where he inspires all the artists:

He took his place among the workmen, a conventual novice; a novice also as to whatever concerns any actual handicraft. He could but compound sweet incense for the sanctuary. And yet, again by merely visible presence, he made himself felt in all the varied exercise around him of those arts which address themselves first of all to sight. (pp. 79-80)

The pagan abandon of the early Dionysus has been modified: "It was as if the gay old pagan world had been blessed in some way" (p. 80). Denys helps the medieval church develop its art and music, creating the organ for an ecclesiastical music "that might express the whole compass of souls now grown to manhood" (p. 81). But the third stage of the myth of

Dionysus is "the rending to pieces of a divine child, of whom a tradition, scanty indeed, but harmonious in its variations, had long maintained itself" (GS, p. 47). Denys takes the chief part in a popular pageant of the pursuit of Winter through the streets of Auxerre. He is torn to pieces by the crowd, but his dismembered body becomes a symbol of fertility and resurrection:

The men stuck little shreds of his flesh, or, failing that, of his torn raiment, into their caps; the women lending their long hairpins for the purpose (IP, pp. 87-8)

This particular sentence is always selected for condemnation and as proof of Pater's latent sadism; it is remarkably ill-judged. But it is difficult to see how Pater could otherwise have expressed the cultural myth of Dionysus with such relevance for the nineteenth century. In "A Study of Dionysus" he says,

he has also a peculiar message for a certain number of refined minds, seeking, in the later days of Greek religion, such modifications of the old legend as may minister to ethical culture, to the perfecting of the moral nature. A type of second birth, from first to last, he opens, in his series of annual changes, for minds on the look-out for it, the hope of a possible analogy, between the resurrection of nature, and something else, as yet unrealised, reserved for human souls; and the beautiful, weeping creature, vexed by the wind, suffering, torn to pieces, and rejuvenescent again at last, like a tender shoot of living green out of the hardness and stony darkness of the earth, becomes an emblem or ideal of chastening and purification, and of final victory through suffering. (GS, p. 45)

The fund of belief residing in the mythical figure of Dionysus is equated with faith in Christianity; Dionysus is a "type of second birth", an "emblem", and "ideal" of both belief and of renaissance. Pater then connects this sacrifice of Dionysus with the re-awakening of the middle ages:

Old friends with new faces, though they had, as Plato witnesses, their less worthy aspect, in certain appeals to vulgar, superstitious fears, they seem to have been not without the charm of a real and inward religious beauty, with their neologies, their new readings of old legends, their sense of mystical second meanings, as they refined

upon themes grown too familiar, and linked, in a sophisticated age, the new to the old. In this respect, we may perhaps liken them to the mendicant orders in the Middle Ages, with their florid, romantic theology, beyond the bounds of orthodox tradition, giving so much new matter to art and poetry. (p. 46)

The old and the new are linked through the death of Denys; once again death is not failure or abrupt termination, but a symbol of the assimilation of the new in the old, the old being modified yet retaining its best characteristics in its union with the new, equally modified.

The introduction of "Denys l'Auxerrois" reinforces the theme of the story, that the nineteenth century requires a complex, and to some degree, suffering, "type", even of Classicism. It is a signpost to the reader not to take the reappearance of Dionysus as wholly a Hellenic invasion of the middle ages, but as an embodiment of the transition from old to new, where the old paganism becomes a newly creative culture, and the old medievalism similarly feeds from paganism:

since we are no longer children, we might as well question the advantage of the return to us of a condition of life in which, by the nature of the case, the values of things would, so to speak, lie wholly on their surfaces, unless we could regain also the childish consciousness, or rather unconsciousness, in ourselves, to take all that adroitly and with the appropriate lightness of heart. (IP, p. 51)

The insertion of Denys in the history of Auxerre is a part of this rebuttal of common desires for the return of a golden age. From a description of the cathedrals and rivers of Troyes, Sens and Auxerre, where the countryside and cultural conditions were influential in the building of different architectural styles, Pater offers a more sophisticated, because imaginative, analysis. He rewrites history so that the rain brings out the presence of Denys. Whereas in Sens, the severity of the Pointed style of the cathedral is in harmony with

the cleanly quiet of the town, kept fresh by little channels of clear water circulating through its streets, derivatives of the rapid Vanne which falls just below into the Yonne. (p. 55)

in Auxerre,

its physiognomy is not quite happy--attractive in part for its melancholy. Its most characteristic atmosphere is to be seen when the tide of light and distant cloud is travelling quickly over it, when rain is not far off, and every touch of art or of time on its old building is defined in clear gray. (p. 57)

The rain prevents the narrator from walking around the town, and directs him to a shop where he discovers the first signs of Denys's presence.

Later on, we hear that Denys is in communion with the rain:

Long before it came he could detect the scent of rain from afar, and would climb with delight to the great scaffolding of the unfinished tower to watch its coming over the thirsty vine-land, till it rattled on the great tiled roof of the church below; and then, throwing off his mantle, allow it to bathe his limbs freely, clinging firmly against the tempestuous wind among the carved imageries of dark stone. (pp. 52-3)

As water, rain, rivers, and cultural conditions have resulted in special forms of architecture in Troyes, Sens and Auxerre, so the rain might just as well bring forth Denys, who therefore achieves a special status in this "history" of one area of France. The end of the story suggests that the Denys we have been given as an addition to our received history still exists; that he still has a part to play in the nineteenth century:

On days of a certain atmosphere, when the trace of the Middle Age comes out, like old marks in the stones in rainy weather, I seemed actually to have seen the tortured figure there--to have met Denys l'Auxerrois in the streets. (p. 88)

v "Sebastian van Storck"

Sebastian, a young and well-appointed Dutch gentleman of the mid-seventeenth century, cannot fit his temperament with the prevailing cheerfulness and confidence of the Dutch people around him. It is a society of achievement and action: "Holland, just then, was reposing on its laurels after its long contest with Spain, in a short period of complete wellbeing"

(p. 95), and

In the eager, gallant life of that age, if the sword fell for a moment into its sheath, they were for starting off on perilous voyages to the regions of frost and snow in search after that 'North-Western passage', for the discovery of which the States-General had offered large rewards. (p. 110)

Sebastian has inherited this fondness for practical action; his tutor writes to his parents:

'he seems to me to be one practical in this sense, that his theorems will shape life for him, directly; that he will always seek, as a matter of course, the effective equivalent to--the line of being which shall be the proper continuation of--his line of thinking! (pp. 93-4)

However, he rejects the society's ways of expressing itself, in warm paintings of the ideal of "the good-fellowship of family life" (p. 99). The only one of these heroes with a father who is interested in his son's progress, Sebastian rejects the fertility of his family background. He develops a personal philosophy stemming from a saying by Spinoza; he reasons that "the world is but a thought, or series of thoughts; that it exists, therefore, solely in mind" (p. 120). Everything is "zero without him" (p. 121); "All was but conscious mind" (p. 121). From this he develops the apprehension of "one absolute mind" (p. 122), and concludes that the best thing to do is to seek to eradicate everything accidental to that mind, even to "the suppression of ourselves" (p. 123). This leads him to strenuous efforts of self-effacement, and to nihilism.

In a review of Amiel's "Journal Intime", published in the Guardian in the same month as "Sebastian van Storck" was published in Macmillan's Magazine, Pater quotes Amiel:

'Every landscape', he writes, 'is, as it were, a state of the soul': and again, 'At bottom there is but one subject of study; the forms and metamorphoses of mind: all other subjects may be reduced to that; all other studies bring us back to this study'. ³⁴

³⁴ "Amiel's 'Journal Intime'," in Essays from 'The Guardian', p. 27.

In "Sebastian van Storck" Sebastian is drawn to the sea, a characteristic of Holland very different from the domestic life most of the Dutchmen celebrate:

The sea which Sebastian so much loved, and with so great a satisfaction and sense of wellbeing in every hint of its nearness, is never far distant in Holland. Invading all places, stealing under one's feet, insinuating itself everywhere along an endless network of canals (by no means such formal channels as we understand the name, but picturesque rivers, with sedgy banks and haunted by innumerable birds) its incidents present themselves oddly even in one's park or woodland walks; the ship in full sail appearing suddenly among the great trees or above the garden wall, where we had no suspicion of the presence of water. (pp. 105-6)

He therefore responds to a large part of the nature of his home, but he is not interested in the "domestication" of the sea, as the painters portray it, or in the pathos of Dutch life caused by the proximity of the sea's threat; to him it signifies that eradication of humanity which satisfies him:

he found it pleasant to think of the resistless element which left one hardly a foot-space amidst the yielding sand; of the old beds of lost rivers, surviving now only as deeper channels in the sea; of the remains of a certain ancient town, which within men's memory had lost its few remaining inhabitants, and, with its already empty tombs, dissolved and disappeared in the flood. (p. 106)

This is a large part of the state of Dutchmen's souls; Pater quotes Pliny twice to the effect that Holland is scarcely dry land at all, "as 'the ocean poured in its flood twice a day, making it uncertain whether the country was a part of the continent or of the sea'" (p. 108). It has therefore always been a salient feature of Dutch life.

However, Pliny felt a contempt for the Dutch, who resented the colonization by Rome, caused by their humble and circumscribed existence beside the sea. This struggle between homely, Dutch values, and the exotic life of the south is pursued throughout the portrait. The Dutch painting is completely indigenous:

Of the earth earthy--genuine red earth of the old Adam--it was an ideal very different from that which the sacred Italian painters had evoked from the life of Italy, yet, in its best types, was not without a kind of natural religiousness. And in the achievement of a type of beauty so national and vernacular, the votaries of purely Dutch art might well feel that the Italianisers, like Berghem, Boll, and Jan Weenix, went so far afield in vain. (pp. 99-100)

Sebastian understands his ancestors' resistance to the power of Rome, reflecting that the isolation of fishing and living by the sea would have been very attractive. The Dutch wish to expand north, to explore the North-Western passage, instead of travelling south to the lands of ancient civilization. Whereas Sebastian's friends and family create an art out of their secluded ways of life, Sebastian seems to need the illuminating spark of Classicism. He is, in fact, a figure of Hellenic purity in a teeming, lively world. The first vision of him, as he skates, is of a kind of Atticism:

Thomas de Keyser, who understood better than any one else the kind of quaint new Atticism which had found its way into the world over those waste salt marshes, wondering whether quite its finest type as he understood it might ever actually be seen there, saw it at last, in lively motion, in the person of Sebastian. (p. 95)

Sebastian is like that Greek sculpture in "Winckelmann" ("Its white light, purged from the angry, bloodlike stains of action and passion, reveals, not what is accidental in man, but the god in him, as opposed to man's restless movement"). He needs nothing but the purity of expanse as a surrounding. However, we may remember that Greek civilization grew out of a response to natural phenomena in a desire to embody all the disparate observations; it became sculpture. Sebastian may respond to the nature around him, but he yearns after annihilation, not embodiment; his society has, on the other hand, directed its responses to nature into the containing artifice of art. Sebastian has taken a wrong step. He "refused to travel" (p. 101), preferring the limitlessness of the

Dutch horizon to the journey to the south. His journey is a mental one, where he seeks to disembarass himself of all "impediments" (p. 103), instead of enriching life.

In his reasoning, Sebastian resembles Baruch de Spinoza, the Dutch philosopher who lived from 1632 to 1677, and Pater actually arranges a meeting between them. The portrait is in one sense an examination of Spinoza's philosophy, for he was very popular in the nineteenth century. In the last section of the portrait, Sebastian's journal, Pater quotes from Spinoza. Lessing and Goethe first awakened interest in him; in the nineteenth century his philosophy was interpreted in two different ways:

to some he has appeared primarily as a man obsessed with God, a pantheist who interprets every natural phenomenon as a revelation of an immanent but impersonal God; to others he has appeared as a harsh materialist and determinist who denies all significance to morality and religion. 35

George Eliot began a translation of Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico-Politicus in March 1843. She found in him a pantheism which enabled her to retain her values in spite of her rejection of Christianity.³⁶ This aspect of Spinoza's thought is captured in "Sebastian van Storck", when a priest reassures Sebastian's mother:

The aged man smiled, observing how, even for minds by no means superficial, the mere dress it wears alters the look of a familiar thought--with a happy sort of smile as he added (reflecting that the truth of Sebastian's apprehension was duly covered by the propositions of his own creed, and quoting Sebastian's favourite pagan wisdom from the lips of Saint Paul) 'In Him, we live, and move, and have our being'. (p. 131)

However, by 1852 George Eliot, for one, had rejected pantheism; she

³⁵ Stuart Hampshire, Spinoza (London: Penguin, 1951), p. 27.

³⁶ See Bernard J. Paris, Experiments in Life: George Eliot's Quest for Values (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1965), p. 11 ff.

preferred materialism to what she called "the phantasmagoria of hope unsustained by reason".³⁷ In his History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte G.H. Lewes continues to regard Spinoza as a supreme idealist who works from the basis of absolute intuitive knowledge, and in The Life and Works of Goethe he distinguishes between Goethe and Spinoza. Goethe was a positive thinker on the a priori Method; a Method vicious only when the seeker rests contented with his own assumptions, or seeks only a partial hasty confrontation with facts. . . ; a Method eminently philosophic when it merely goes before the facts, anticipating what will be the tardy conclusions of experience. 38

On the other hand, says Lewes, the method of metaphysics is

the determination of the external order according to analogies drawn from within. The culmination of this Method is seen in the fundamental axiom of Des Cartes and Spinoza: all clear ideas are true. 39

For George Eliot, the conflict was between realism and idealism; she turned to realism for its connection of subjectivity and objectivity, its sympathy with other human beings, as we see in Adam Bede. However, to Matthew Arnold, Spinoza was, in spite of great odds, a religious man:

Compared with the soldier of irreligion M. Van Vloten would have him be, Spinoza is religious. . . . his own language about himself, about his aspirations and his course, are true: his foot is in the vera vita, his eye on the beatific vision. 40

Spinoza was, then, a crux at which many nineteenth-century preoccupations met and contended; his philosophy was open to varying interpretations. Pater reveals a stern rejection of Spinoza's brand of metaphysics in Plato and Platonism:

³⁷ George Eliot, letter to John Chapman (24-5 July 1852), in Letters, ed. G.S. Haight, 7 vols. (London: OUP, 1954), II, 49.

³⁸ The Life and Works of Goethe (London: Dent, 1908), p. 353.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 366.

⁴⁰ "Spinoza and the Bible", Complete Prose Works, III, 182.

An infectious mania, it might seem,--that strange passion for nonentity, to which the Greek was so oddly liable, to which the human mind generally might be thought to have been constitutionally predisposed; for the doctrine of 'The One' had come to the surface before in old Indian dreams of self-annihilation . . . It presents itself once more, now altogether beyond Christian influence, in the hard and ambitious intellectualism of Spinoza; a doctrine of pure repellent substance--substance 'in vacuo', to be lost in which, however, would be the proper consummation of the transitory individual life. (p. 33)

But Pater does admit that it is a permanent strain in the human mind, and his objection to it is that it is dangerous in the nineteenth century. Earlier in this chapter on the influence of Parmenides on Plato he has said,

The wholesome scepticism of Hume or Mill for instance, the scepticism of the modern world, beset now with insane speculative figments, has been an appeal from the preconceptions of the understanding to the authority of the senses. With the Greeks, whose metaphysic business was then still all to do, the sceptical action of the mind lay rather in the direction of an appeal from the affirmations of sense to the authority of newly-awakened reason. (pp. 24-5)

Spinoza's philosophy is dangerous, therefore, because it leads men of the nineteenth century away from the correct solution to the underlying question of what is substance: the "authority of the senses". Pater mentions Spinoza in Gaston de Latour:

That Deity is everywhere, like all such abstract propositions, is a two-edged force, depending for its practical effect on the mind which admits it on the peculiar perspective of that mind. To Dutch Spinoza, in the next century, faint, consumptive, with a naturally faint hold on external things, the theorem that God was in all things whatever, annihilating their differences, suggested a somewhat chilly withdrawal from the contact of all alike. But in Bruno, eager and impassioned, an Italian of the Italians, it awoke a constant, inextinguishable appetite for every form of experience. 41

This contrast of Holland and Italy echoes the contrast in "Sebastian van

⁴¹ Gaston de Latour: An Unfinished Romance (London: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 185-6. Subsequent page references will be included in the text, prefixed where necessary for purposes of clarity by GL.

Storck". It suggests that the alignment of such a philosophy is determined by temperament. Sebastian may represent a type of Atticism to the Dutch, but it is one that does not catch fire from its surroundings; the realist art of his society does. Even Spinoza himself does not despise art as much as Sebastian does: he sketches Sebastian surreptitiously during their conversation.

Sebastian's philosophy resembles what Pater says in the "Conclusion" to The Renaissance. But although the melancholy and isolation are supremely modern states of mind, Pater there stresses the necessity for art to compensate, and for a true Hellenism once again to emerge. Sebastian, on the other hand, tries to make a virtue out of isolation, and rejects art:

There have been dispositions in which that abstract theorem has only induced a renewed value for the finite interests around and within us. Centre of heat and light, truly nothing has seemed to lie beyond the touch of its perpetual summer. It has allied itself to the poetical or artistic sympathy, which feels challenged to acquaint itself with and explore the various forms of finite existence all the more intimately, just because of that sense of one lively spirit circulating through all things--a tiny particle of the one soul in the sunbeam, or the leaf. Sebastian van Storck, on the contrary, was determined, perhaps, by some inherited satiety and fatigue in his nature, to the opposite issue of the practical dilemma. For him, that one abstract being was as the pallid arctic sun, disclosing itself over the dead level of a glacial, a barren and absolutely lonely sea. The lively purpose of life had been frozen out of it. (IP, pp. 124-5)

It is significant that the first sight we have of Sebastian is when he is skating: his ideal, as the narrator says, for he is enjoying the supreme reduction of the emptiness of a stretch of water to a lifeless, frozen surface. We may remember the fruitful effect of the frequent rain in "Denys l'Auxerrois", which calls up the spirit of Denys for the narrator,

and which creates the great French cathedrals.⁴²

Gerald Monsman says in Pater's Portraits that

it is of primary importance that Sebastian, unlike Pater's other heroes, is neither an artist nor, it is quite evident, a truly creative personality. This is the direct result of that One-sided, sterile philosophy which so directly shaped his manner of life. ⁴³

This lack of productivity is central to "Sebastian van Storck". In his review of Amiel's "Journal Intime", translated by Mrs Humphry Ward, Pater rejects the journal as a merely "admirable specimen" of a well-educated man, and presents Amiel as a "type" of

that perplexity or complexity of soul, the expression of which, so it be with an adequate literary gift, has its legitimate, because inevitable, interest for the modern reader. (EG, pp. 22-3)

It is the precariousness of Amiel's "literary gift" that captures Pater's interest: Amiel is a man conducting the by now familiar dialogue with himself, and the stronger side of him is

possessed of gifts, not for the renunciation, but for the reception and use, of all that is puissant, goodly, and effective in life, and for the varied and adequate literary reproduction of it; who, under favourable circumstances, or even without them, will become critic, or poet, and in either case a creative force; (p. 25)

But despite the talent displayed in the journal for what Pater calls "imaginative criticism",

something held him back: not so much a reluctance of temperament, or of physical constitution . . . but a cause purely intellectual--the presence in him, namely of a certain vein of opinion; (pp. 30-1)

This vein of opinion is Amiel's belief in an empty "Absolute", which he called "Maia". It turned him away from the concrete, the limited, in quest of an objective, infinite ideal. The journal, it should be added,

⁴² The imagery of the sea is also important in "An English Poet", discussed in Chapter III; there, it is prevented from being dangerously limitless by its close association with the estuary of the river and the beanfield.

⁴³ op. cit., p. 119.

was only published after Amiel's death.

Like Spinoza, Amiel enjoyed a popularity in late nineteenth-century England. He represented to many that "doubting man" that they felt themselves to be, and in reading his journal they could at last locate the source of the malady: German philosophy. In her introduction to her translation Mrs Ward quotes Mark Pattison:

'I wish to convey to you, sir', writes the Rector of Lincoln, 'the thanks of one at least of the public for giving the light to this precious record of a unique experience. I say unique, but I can vouch that there is in existence at least one other soul which has lived through the same struggles, mental and moral, as Amiel'. 44

Nor surprisingly, Matthew Arnold, the man who suppressed his own most subjective poetry, wrote an essay rejecting Amiel.⁴⁵

Pater presents Sebastian as the warning spectre of the philosophy which, when espoused by nineteenth-century man beset by doubts and loneliness, can lead only to negation and inactivity. He endows Sebastian with advantages that the nineteenth century cannot have: a rich and expressive art, a human sympathy in the face of all odds, and therefore by contrast shows the destructiveness of such a philosophy for the nineteenth century. He also suggests the positive route, through a Hellenism. Sebastian dies at the end because he has saved a child from

⁴⁴ Amiel's Journal: The Journal Intime of Henri-Frédéric Amiel, transl. Mrs Humphry Ward (London: Macmillan, new ed., 1889), p. x.

⁴⁵ "Amiel", Complete Prose Works, XI, 265-81. For example, on p. 273 Arnold says:

I cannot, therefore, fall in with that particular line of admiration which critics, praising Amiel's Journal, have commonly followed. I cannot join in celebrating his prodigies of speculative intuition, the marvellous pages in which his deep and vast philosophic thought is laid bare, the secret of his sublime malady is expressed. I hesitate to admit that all this part of the Journal has even a very profound psychological interest: its interest is rather pathological. In reading it we are not so much pursuing a study of psychology as a study of morbid pathology.

a freak flood of the sea he has so often wished would engulf all life. His death is a result of a single impulse of sympathy; but more importantly, perhaps, he has achieved his own ideal while recognizing that the young, the next generation, must be saved: that there must be a posterity. His death does not negate his own philosophy at all, for he would have died anyway from tuberculosis,

a disease then coming into the world; disease begotten by the fogs of that country--waters, he observed, not in their place, 'above the firmament'--on people grown somewhat over-delicate in their nature by the effects of modern luxury. (IP, p. 133)

To Pater, symbolic tuberculosis is still threatening the world, and has not died with Sebastian. His answer is the action of the other Dutchmen. In placing this portrait in the time of Spinoza, Pater is accepting that this state of mind is permanent, but is suggesting that it is inappropriate for the nineteenth century. He is therefore rewriting history here for greater clarification, for a clarification of Spinoza that will help and divert his fellow-men from unproductive reasoning to creative art.

vi "Duke Carl of Rosenmold"

"Duke Carl of Rosenmold" is linked with "Sebastian van Storck" and helps to explain that ambitious work, which is almost too full of Pater's deepest preoccupations. "Sebastian van Storck" begins with Sebastian skating, a vision of Atticism to some, but only because he is "in lively motion" (p. 95). "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" ends with a portrait of Goethe, written by his mother:

'There, skated my son, like an arrow among the groups. Away he went over the ice like a son of the gods. Anything so beautiful is not to be seen now. I clapped my hands for joy. Never shall I forget him as he darted out from one arch of the bridge, and in again under the other, the wind carrying the train behind him as he flew'.
(p. 180)

Lessing and Goethe "rediscovered" Spinoza after he had languished in neglect for over a hundred years. The nineteenth century later expended much energy trying to define exactly what Goethe drew from Spinoza.

Lewes saw them as polar opposites in their philosophy and way of procedure. Matthew Arnold joined in the discussion in his essay on Spinoza:

For a mind like Goethe's--a mind profoundly impartial and passionately aspiring after the science, not of men only, but of universal nature--the popular philosophy which explains all things by reference to man, and regards universal nature as existing for the sake of man, and even certain classes of men, was utterly repulsive. ⁴⁶

He decides that Spinoza's breadth of vision is what attracted Goethe:

Spinoza first impresses Goethe and any man like Goethe, and then he composes him; first he fills and satisfies his imagination by the width and grandeur of his view of nature, and then he fortifies and stills his mobile, straining, passionate, poetic temperament by the moral lesson he draws from his view of nature.

Goethe was, to Pater and to many others, the "type" of modern man in his complexity. Pater divides Amiel into two souls: the doubting, questing exponent of "Maia", and the active creator. In the same way, Goethe possesses two sides, the subjective philosopher and the objective lover of the senses.⁴⁷ "Sebastian" and "Duke Carl" portray the former and the latter respectively. But both are shown to be misguided in their essentially true diagnosis of cultural problems. Sebastian turns to the sea; Carl embraces any new type of art: both are right and yet wrong.

Many of Pater's heroes experience a compulsion to travel to the south: Joachim du Bellay and Winckelmann in The Renaissance; Marius;

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, III, 177.

⁴⁷ Anthony Ward, p. 30, says: "There was an ideal as well as a real constituent in knowledge. Goethe recognised the limited possibilities of realism. Pater responds to this second aspect of Goethe's thinking quite as readily as he does to the first."

Watteau, Denys and most notably, Duke Carl in Imaginary Portraits. This pattern derives from Goethe's experiences, especially in the Italienische Reise, to which Pater refers in The Renaissance.⁴⁸ All these journeys or intentions to travel are essentially rehearsals of the great journey undertaken by Goethe. Duke Carl's and Winckelmann's are the closest to what was actually to take place. Goethe had joined the Court of Weimar in 1775 in a moment of impulse, rushing away from Heidelberg and the fame of Werther with the Grand Duke. He stayed there for eleven years, and then, having exercised his powers of scientific objectivity and responsibility to the full, he once again fled:

On 28 August, he celebrated his thirty-seventh birthday in Carlsbad, where a number of the court were taking the waters. Two or three days later all the party except Goethe and the Grand Duke returned to Weimar under the impression that Goethe was going on a short geological excursion into the mountains. After they had gone, Goethe asked the Duke for leave of absence and, at three in the morning on 3 September, jumped into a coach with no servant and hardly any luggage, assumed the name of Müller, and bolted. He does not appear to have been very explicit about his plans even to his sovereign.⁴⁹

The suddenness and anonymity of this journey resemble Carl's, whose determination to escape the sleepy court in which he has grown up results "in headlong flight night and day" (pp. 164-5). However, unlike Goethe, Carl has been born in the court; he has to fake his own death in order to break with his past:

And then, duke or no duke, it was understood that he willed that things should in no case be precisely as they had been. He would never again be quite so near people's lives as in the past--a fitful, intermittent visitor--almost as if he had been properly dead; the empty coffin remaining as a kind of symbolic 'coronation incident', setting forth his future relations to his subjects. (pp. 163-4)

⁴⁸ See Anthony Ward, p. 28, for a list of the references to Goethe in The Renaissance.

⁴⁹ J.W. Goethe, Italian Journey, transl. W.H. Auden and Elisabeth Mayer (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 14.

Carl is living at the beginning of the eighteenth century, some eighty years before Goethe's flight from Weimar. His function in the portrait is to prepare the ground for the German Enlightenment. At the end of the portrait Pater makes this quite clear:

As precursors Goethe gratefully recognised them, and understood that there had been a thousand others, looking forward to a new era in German literature with the desire which is in some sort a 'forecast of capacity', awakening each other to the permanent reality of a poetic ideal in human life, slowly forming that public consciousness to which Goethe actually addressed himself. (p. 179)

When Goethe travels to Italy, then, he has behind him a fruitful heritage which it is his role to complete and to express fully. He had already written Götz von Berlichingen and Werther, and was struggling with Iphigenie. The experience of classical culture and Renaissance art crystallized Iphigenie, as Pater remarks in The Renaissance.⁵⁰ Goethe's Italian journey therefore was the means of fusing in Goethe's work the romantic and the classical strains.

Carl is born into the court of Rosenmold, where "Time . . . might seem to have been standing still almost since the Middle Age" (p. 139). He has a rich heritage in the sense that his family stems from Charlemagne; but the art and appurtenances of life do not reflect his present day:

human life--its thoughts, its habits, above all, its etiquette--had been put out by no matter of excitement, political or intellectual, ever at all, one might say, at any time. . . . An immense heraldry, that truly Germany vanity, had grown, expatiating, florid, eloquent, over everything, without and within--windows, house-fronts, church walls, and church floors. (pp. 140, 141)

⁵⁰ SHR, p. 199:

So perfectly did the young Raffaele infuse that Heiterkeit, that pagan blitheness, into religious works, that his picture of Saint Agatha at Bologna became to Goethe a step in the evolution of 'Iphigenie'. But in proportion as this power of smiling was refound, there came also an aspiration towards that lost antique art, some relics of which Christian art had buried in itself, ready to work wonders when their day came.

Carl discovers in a lumber-room a book of 1486 by Conrad Celtes, from which he selects a closing Sapphic ode, "To Apollo, praying that he would come to us from Italy, bringing his lyre with him" (p. 142). It is a Hellenic shaft of light piercing the "candle-light" of Rosenmold. But because he has no artistic heritage against which to measure the new, Carl cannot focus his classical aspirations, and takes up contemporary French art: "Apollo in the dandified costume of Lewis the Fourteenth" (p. 143). Carl has omitted the stage in beginnings of any kind where the image, the type, or the culture is drawn out of prevailing thoughts and feelings. He has no true bond with Classicism; even the ode by Celtes ends the book and is therefore an expression of hope rather than a description of a living culture in Germany.

There are three endings in this portrait: Carl's false death and funeral, his actual death at the hands of an invading army, and his end as a beginning for Goethe. Carl's false death is a copy of his ancestor's act; he has previously tried to ascertain some hereditary link with a southern race, but has been assured that the Rosenmolds "were as indigenous, incorruptible heraldry asserted, as the old yew-trees asquat on the heath" (p. 156). By imitating Charlemagne's faked death, he is accepting and ending his complete connection with Germany, creating for himself a history from which he can expand. It releases him for the journey south, but just as his ending was false, so is this beginning; he realizes that

Straight through life, straight through nature and man, with one's own self-knowledge as a light thereon, not by way of the geographical Italy or Greece, lay the road to the new Hellas, to be realised now as the outcome of home-born German genius. (p. 172)

The second ending for Carl is in the midst of confusion. He is struck down as he is about to make a completely new beginning by marrying a

peasant girl. The invading army is like the crossing armies in "A Prince of Court Painters": it signifies that nothing has yet begun or ended for Carl personally; he has not achieved, but only been an expression of the necessary confusion of German culture before it became history for Goethe. The final ending, for Carl and for the portrait, is when Carl himself has become history and can therefore become the "Rosenmold" for Goethe. The portrait begins from the perspective of Goethe's time, the beginning of the nineteenth century, and

The minds of those still interested in the matter were now at last made up, the disposition of the remains suggesting to them the lively picture of a sullen night, the unexpected passing of the great army, and the two lovers rushing forth wildly, at the sudden tumult outside their cheerful shelter, caught in the dark and trampled out so, surprised and unseen, among the horses and heavy guns. (p. 139)

In this portrait Pater delves into the present of temporal confusion, only to emerge at the beginning and the end at the point where Carl can begin to be a "type", drawing together the past, present and future; at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Whereas "Sebastian van Storck" is a static, muted portrait, of one who sought to extinguish classicism before it had taken root, "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" is characterized by the frenetic activity of the young duke, making false journeys, false excursus into a premature Classicism. The activity and the serenity are both captured in the vignette of Goethe at the end, who unlike Sebastian brought a healthy vitality to Classicism and unlike Carl brought a true Classical restraint to the richness of German life. From their false beginnings, Goethe adopted as history a heritage from which he could embark on a perfect and necessarily complex new beginning for Western culture.

In Imaginary Portraits Pater rewrites history so that the confusions

are given coherence, and so that the confused nineteenth century has a set of clear "types" from which to forge a new way. The "failures" of all his heroes are only so within an immediate context. With the hindsight Pater brings to bear, each death clarifies a stage in culture, and even the greatest failure, Sebastian's, is circumscribed by being placed firmly in the past, with no power to harm further the despairing nineteenth century. "Form" has here become an agent of all writing, so that by means of typification, and the impersonality drawn from Greek sculpture, the nineteenth century is reacquainted with the aspects of Classicism which can help it. Classicism becomes as much the expression of deeply-felt, native impulses as an importation of Hellenism. Consequently the journey, which is doomed never to end, as we have seen in Marius, is only satisfactory if, like Goethe, the quester takes with him the answer: his own origins. Watteau lacks a true heritage; he never reaches Rome, and does not find what he is looking for in Paris. Denys brings Classicism to every culture. Sebastian should travel, but doesn't: he has the fruitful origins, but rejects them. Carl is too impatient for the real journey.

CHAPTER V

Imaginary Portraits: the importance of "genre" paintings

The artistic energy of a great nation is not a mere accident, of which we can neither determine the cause nor foresee the result. It is, on the contrary, the resultant of the genius and character of the people; the reflection of the social conditions under which it was called into being; and the product of the civilisation to which it owes its birth.

Henry Havard, The Dutch School of Painting, transl. G. Powell (London: Cassell, 1885), p. 1.

i "The School of Giorgione"

In his review of Imaginary Portraits on 11 June 1887, Oscar Wilde began:

To convey ideas through the medium of images has always been the aim of those who are artists as well as thinkers in literature, and it is to a desire to give a sensuous environment to intellectual concepts that we owe Mr. Pater's last volume. ¹

Wilde's comparisons of Pater's heroes are all with painters rather than writers; for instance he compares the description of Denys with the style of Mantegna. He uses the word "artist" in a local rather than general sense when he concludes,

If he be not among the greatest writers of our literature he is, at least, our greatest artist in prose; . . . we should be grateful for a style that deliberately aims at perfection of form, that seeks to produce its effect by artistic means and sets before itself an ideal of grave and chastened beauty.

Pater appears to have appreciated this review, for he asked Wilde especially to try to review his next book Appreciations.² Other reviewers also commented on the visual nature of the writing. In the Saturday Review, for example, the comment was made:

The distinctive merit and characteristic of the whole book will be missed if the reader does not appreciate what the author has evidently tried to do. He must not consider himself as listening to a tale-teller, but as watching an artist gradually adding stroke to stroke, and producing, not so much a successive effect, as in narration, but a combined and total impression, as in drawing. It is, of course, open to any one to contend that this aiming at a mixture of pictura and poesis, or rather at a method half-way between the two, is too eccentric and too little universal to be wholly justifiable. We shall go so far as to admit that it can never be widely practised, and that, practised unskilfully, it would be very nearly intolerable. But then it is not likely to be widely practised, and in Mr. Pater's hands it is practised very skilfully indeed . . . Besides, it pays the reader the compliment of expecting him to be able to do a considerable part of the work, and of understanding the game sufficiently to anticipate, or at least to seize at once, the players'

¹ "Mr. Pater's Imaginary Portraits", Pall Mall Gazette; cit. Seiler, pp. 162-5.

² See LWP No. 174.

strokes. 3

Recent critics have also been swift to remark Pater's visual effects. "It is the fiction of an art critic", says U.C. Knoepfelmacher.⁴ Stephen Bann comments, *passim*, on "the intensely plastic narrative effects of a 'portrait' like 'Duke Carl of Rosenmold'".⁵

In The Renaissance Pater connects the human personality and his art, and uses the biography to comment upon the paintings. The paintings become corollaries of the representativeness of the artists, revealing the romantic impulses, for example, which convert Michelangelo and Leonardo into forerunners of the modern day. They afford these proofs through the appeal they have for Pater; by analysing what he sees in them, he draws conclusions from which he creates his book. It is evident that this approach to the paintings disregards their formal properties in favour of a "subjective" response. Thus Solomon Fishman observes, "[Pater] links the specific aesthetic virtue to the personality of the artist rather than to the age in which he lived", and, "His distinction lies in his peculiar susceptibility to expressive elements in the visual arts".⁶ However, in his work on Greek mythology Pater regards the creation of human personality and the development of art as concomitant: both are manifestations of human thought and feeling. Art differs from human personality in being the expression of half-grasped personalization;

³ Saturday Review (25 June 1887), p. 921, column 1.

⁴ Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel, p. 159.

⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁶ The Interpretation of Art: Essays on the Art Criticism of John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Clive Bell, Roger Fry and Herbert Read (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1963), p. 49, pp. 62-3.

it is not merely a reflector. When Pater explores the beginnings of his own personality, he becomes aware of the importance of the beginnings of art. In "The Child in the House" the ideal home is Surrey or Kent, and the paintings reflecting such a home are Dutch or Flemish paintings. This directs Pater to examining art as a response to its surroundings, and its times: a radically different approach to art from his previous use of it as convenient proof of personality.

The inclusion of "The School of Giorgione" in the third edition of The Renaissance shows a desire to add a more sophisticated criticism of art to Pater's earlier theories.⁷ In this essay Pater's famous dictum appears, "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music". This formula in fact misleads, in suggesting that music is the central focus of the essay. Instead of stressing the similarities of the arts, Pater is intent upon defining the characteristics of each individual form of art. Art, he says, addresses the "imaginative reason" through the senses, and each art does this in a different way. False generalizations of criticism tend to obscure the distinctive characteristics of a form of art, and this is particularly true in the criticism of painting. Pater then defines "that true pictorial quality" as

the inventive or creative handling of pure line and colour, . . . the drawing--the design projected from that peculiar pictorial temperament or constitution, in which, while it may possibly be ignorant of true anatomical proportions, all things whatever, all

⁷ Solomon Fishman comments:

'The School of Giorgione', as far as it goes, is a notable document in art criticism, providing the rationale, if not the means, for the formal analysis of style. It is a carefully reasoned work, the major part of which is devoted to relatively abstract critical theory, and not at all characteristic of the impressionistic approach announced in the Preface. . . . Pater has defined the area which was to absorb the attention of the formalist critics of the present century--the area of 'significant form'. (pp. 67, 69)

poetry, every idea however abstract or obscure, floats up as a visible scene or image: it is the colouring--that weaving as of just perceptible gold threads of light through the dress, the flesh, the atmosphere, in Titian's Lace-girl--the staining of the whole fabric of the thing with a new, delightful physical quality. (Ren, p. 137)

The drawing and the colouring are more important than "temperament" or "idea": the physical, or formalist, properties of the painting, abstracted from the artist and from the theme, become paramount. These qualities must "delight the sense, delight it as directly and sensuously as a fragment of Venetian glass" (p. 138). The painting has no essential reason to have a message, but can be

an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a moment, on the wall or floor: is itself, in truth, a space of such fallen light, caught as the colours are caught in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself. (p. 138)

The subject, therefore, loses importance as the treatment gains: significantly, Pater stresses the refinement of reality that should result.

Pater tries to extend these qualities of painting to all the other arts, by saying that each art passes "into the condition of some other art": music and architecture into painting; architecture into sculpture and poetry; sculpture into colour; poetry into painting. Pater noticeably describes the movement of most of the arts as being towards the pictorial. (His claim that they aspire to music is a result of his initial emphasis that the interpenetration of form and matter is supremely achieved by music. Pater proceeds to discern this interpenetration in painting and poetry.)

As an example, Alphonse Legros in an engraving gives to landscape "an indwelling solemnity of expression, seen upon it or half-seen, within the limits of an exceptional moment, or caught from his own mood perhaps" (p. 141). The actual landscape is endowed with a refinement by the artist.

The "exceptional moment" is, of course, the crystallizing moment when past, present and future become one in a timeless present, and when the fleeting impression is captured. Painting therefore gives the viewer the accomplished crystallization. Actual landscape may, indeed, proffer an artistic character:

Sometimes a momentary tint of stormy light may invest a homely or too familiar scene with a character which might well have been drawn from the deep places of the imagination. Then we might say that this particular effect of light, this sudden inweaving of gold thread through the texture of the haystack, and the poplars, and the grass, gives the scene artistic qualities; that it is like a picture.
(p. 141)

These exceptional moments derive from a mood or a felicitous moment; they occur for everyone, but only painting can capture reality by locating it in a timeless "now". The phrase, "that it is like a picture", assumes an education in art to be a prerequisite of being able to see the moment in nature. There is no such thing as the "innocent eye", as E.H. Gombrich has shown in Art and Illusion.⁸ Painting comes before and after nature: educating the viewer and capturing the moment the viewer sees; capturing the moment and therefore educating the viewer to see it in nature. Art addresses the "imaginative reason", and this is the faculty to cultivate through art.

Pater goes on to discuss Giorgione, whose school never forget

that painting must be before all things decorative, a thing for the eye, a space of colour on the wall, only more dexterously blent than the marking of its precious stone or the chance interchange of sun and shade upon it--this, to begin and end with--whatever higher matter of thought, or poetry, or religious reverie might play its part therein, between (p. 149)

Giorgione's art is "genre", pictures of groups of people in settings,

⁸ Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation (London: Phaidon, 1959).

"morsels of actual life, conversation or music or play, refined upon or idealised, till they come to seem like glimpses of life from afar" (pp. 146-7). By Pater's time, critical thought on Giorgione had severely limited the number of paintings actually attributed to Giorgione, and Pater uses this as an opportunity to stress the ephemeral nature of much of his work:

Much of the work on which Giorgione's immediate fame depended, work done for instantaneous effect, in all probability passed away almost within his own age, like the frescoes on the facade of the fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice, some crimson traces of which, however, still give a strange additional touch of splendour to the scene of the Rialto. (p. 149)

Giorgione's paintings are also designed to be used as a kind of furniture, to be carried around and "used". This makes his work sound similar to Watteau's as Pater describes it in "A Prince of Court Painters". Both Giorgione and Watteau, according to Pater, paint actual life around them; they capture the moment of their time. And Giorgione reproduces subjects which are by their nature transient: music, people at play, water. Pater concludes that his impressions of Giorgione may not adhere to the historical facts of his "authorship", but that he has traced the way Giorgione "enlarges his permanent efficacy and really makes himself felt in our culture" (p. 161).

By claiming this general truth for his observations, Pater shows how he considers his statements about pictorial qualities to be generally applicable and to be operative in a theoretical forum as well as in the local instance of Giorgione. His essay on Giorgione is not biographically based, unlike the other essays in The Renaissance: a mere two pages are devoted to Giorgione's birthplace, childhood, achievements and death: "one or two dates, one or two circumstances" says Pater disparagingly (p. 152), which are the only additions recent criticism has brought to

the knowledge of Giorgione. Pater's emphasis here is on Giorgione as the type of Venetian art,

a sort of impersonation of Venice itself, its projected reflex or ideal, all that was intense or desirable in it thus crystallising about the memory of this wonderful young man. (p. 154)

By being the embodiment of Venice and Venetian life, Giorgione also becomes important to Pater for initiating "all art like this, art which has played so large a part in men's culture since that time" (p. 147).

This kind of art reflects life around it, and at the same time creates

exquisite pauses in time, in which, arrested thus, we seem to be spectators of all the fulness of existence, and which are like some consummate extract or quintessence of life. (pp. 156-7)

Past, present and future are brought together in art: a containment akin to the function of Pater's "types".

This essay marks a departure from the other essays in The Renaissance, into a deeper examination of the way art works for man, and of the nature of art. In his Introduction to an edition of The Renaissance in 1961, Kenneth Clark said:

To realise the originality of these ideas, the reader must recall that the doctrine of painting as a form of visible poetry, justified by a tag from Horace, ut pictura poesis, had been undisputed ever since a theory of art had first been formulated in the Renaissance, when it had been allied, somewhat uneasily, with the doctrine of imitation. To suggest that the basic beauty of a picture was like 'a space of fallen light, caught as in the colours of an Eastern carpet', and that its value increased in so far as it aspired towards the condition of music, was to go beyond even the most adventurous critics of the next generation, beyond, for example, the 'ideated sensations' of Mr Berenson, and arrive at those pure aesthetic sensations which Roger Fry propounded so persuasively in the 1920's. We ask if Pater, with his keen sense of tradition, could really have invented such a revolutionary doctrine; and the answer is, I think, that he did. 9

⁹ Walter Pater, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (Glasgow: Collins, 1961), pp. 21-2. This edition is a reprint of the fourth edition.

This verdict, coming from an art critic rather than from a literary critic, shows how profound are the theoretical points Pater is making in "The School of Giorgione".

ii The Role of Art

Imaginary Portraits is the result of Pater's growing sophistication in the field of art criticism. While Pater adopted from Greek sculpture the method of "typification" for his heroes, his thoughts on art as the expression of a society's customs and of everyday life move him in another direction. Imaginary Portraits contains numerous references to and re-enactments of art and paintings. Watteau is a painter, and many paintings are commented upon; at one point we watch while life is changed into art:

Antony, looking well in his new-fashioned, long-skirted coat, and taller than he really is, made us bring our cream and wild strawberries out of doors, ranging ourselves according to his judgment (for a hasty sketch in that big pocket-book he carries) on the soft slope of one of those fresh spaces in the wood, where the trees unclothe a little, while Jean-Baptiste and my youngest sister danced a minuet on the grass, to the notes of some strolling lutanist who had found us out. (IP, p. 11)

This recalls many of Watteau's most characteristic paintings. The story of Denys develops for the narrator from pictures in an old stained glass window and in a tapestry. The influence of Denys on the young men and women of the town is described as if we were looking at a Greek urn:

Head flung back in ecstasy--the morning sleep among the vines, when the fatigue of the night was over--dew-drenched garments--the serf lying at his ease at last--the artists, then so numerous at the place, caught what they could, something, at least, of the richness, the flexibility of the visible aspects of life, from all this.
(p. 69)

Sebastian is surrounded by seventeenth-century art, and Pater obscures the line between art and life by placing him in a family home which was

painted, and which can actually be seen by the reader:

In complete contrast to all that is abstract or cold, in art, the home of Sebastian, the family mansion of the Storcks--a house, the front of which still survives in one of those patient architectural pieces by Jan van der Heyde--was, in its minute and busy wellbeing, like an epitome of Holland itself, with all the good-fortune of its 'thriving genius' reflected, quite spontaneously, in the national taste. (p. 97)

Duke Carl searches out all kinds of art in an effort to awaken his native country from its centuries-old lethargy. The opening visions of early nineteenth-century people concerning what actually happened to Duke Carl and Gretchen are presented like a painting of the Romantic school:

The minds of those still interested in the matter were now at last made up, the disposition of the remains suggesting to them the lively picture of a sullen night, the unexpected passing of the great army, and the two lovers rushing forth wildly, at the sudden tumult outside their cheerful shelter, caught in the dark and trampled out so, surprised and unseen, among the horses and heavy guns. (p. 139)

The volume, therefore, explores how life becomes art, and how life may be seen as art.

Michael Levey detects a reawakening interest in the "visual" when Pater moved to London, caused perhaps by the easy accessibility of the London art galleries.¹⁰ Certainly Pater was planning to base an imaginary portrait on a painting in the National Gallery when he died.¹¹ One of the sources for "A Prince of Court Painters" may have been Frederick Wedmore's Notes . . . on French Eighteenth Century Art, etc. (1885), for an exhibition of seventy-seven engravings at the Fine Art Society.¹² This practice of using actual paintings as sources for visual

¹⁰ op. cit., p. 175.

¹¹ Arthur Symons writes that in 1889 Pater "had another subject in Moroni's Portrait of a Tailor in the National Gallery, whom he was going to make a Burgomaster". See Chapter I, n. 18.

¹² See LWP, p. 57, n. 3.

effects in writing is significant. It is a part of Pater's compulsive use of previous works of art for his own purposes. But a painting may be said to refuse complete submersion in Pater's work far more than the writings of, say, Arnold and Ruskin. It retains an autonomous identity, a concrete presence, more obviously than does a work of literature. In Art and Its Objects Richard Wollheim says,

That there is a physical object that can be identified as Ulysses or Der Rosenkavalier is not a view that can long survive the demand that we should pick out or point to that object. There is, of course, the copy of Ulysses that is on my table before me now, there is the performance of Der Rosenkavalier that I will go to tonight, and both these two things may (with some latitude, it is true, in the case of the performance) be regarded as physical objects. Furthermore, a common way of referring to these objects is by saying things like 'Ulysses is on my table', 'I shall see Rosenkavalier tonight': from which it would be tempting (but erroneous) to conclude that Ulysses just is my copy of it, Rosenkavalier just is tonight's performance.

13

After having proved that there is no way in which we can identify literature or opera with a physical object, Wollheim turns to painting:

However, those who are ready to concede that some kinds of work of art are not physical objects will yet insist that others are. Ulysses and Der Rosenkavalier may not be physical objects, but the Donna Velata and Donatello's St George most certainly are. . . . In the Pitti there is a canvas (No. 245) 85cm x 64cm: in the Museo Nazionale, Florence, there is a piece of marble 209cm high. It is with these physical objects that those who claim that the Donna Velata and the St George are physical objects would naturally identify them. (pp. 26, 27)

In The Renaissance the dangers of the physical properties of paintings are obvious. Pater describes the Mona Lisa, giving his own highly subjective rendering of the painting. The reader can then turn to the actual painting and agree--or disagree--with Pater's response. It follows that he is free to disagree with the whole of Pater's burden in

¹³ Art and Its Objects (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 21.

The Renaissance.¹⁴ This method does, it is true, give the reader greater responsibility in that he is called upon to complete the experience of looking at a picture, responding, writing, and drawing conclusions.¹⁵ But Pater wishes to capture the reader's assent, and this desire prompts his pervasive habit of quotation.

Wollheim does not subscribe to the identification of paintings as physical objects. He goes on to explore the problems of art criticism based on the representational properties of paintings:

'Representation', I have made clear, I am using in an extended sense: so that, for instance, the figure that occurs, in an ordinary textbook of geometry, at the head of Theorem XI of Euclid could be described as a configuration of intersecting lines, but it could also be thought of as a representation of a triangle. By contrast, I use the phrase 'seeing as' narrowly: uniquely, in the context of representation. In other words, I want to exclude from discussion here such miscellaneous cases as when we see the moon as no bigger than a sixpence, or the Queen of Hearts as the Queen of Diamonds, or (like the young Schiller) the Apollo Belvedere as belonging to the same style as the Laocoon of Rhodes: even though these cases are, I am sure, and could on analysis be shown to be, continuous with those I wish to consider.

With these points clear, I now return to the elucidation of representation in terms of seeing-as. (p. 33)

¹⁴ In "Art Criticism as a Prose Genre", The Art of Victorian Prose, eds. G. Levine and W. Madden (London: OUP, 1968), pp. 39-52, G. Robert Stange says:

the reader is able--and, in fact, stimulated--to have recourse to the original artifact, which is (unlike the objects of natural or emotive description) available to examination, virtually unchanged and discrete. This extra step of perception on the reader's part may enhance or modify his response to the text, but the fact that it is optional gives to the total process an aspect of open-endedness, of incompleteness, which is characteristic of Romantic art.

¹⁵ See R.V. Johnson, Aestheticism (London: Methuen, 1969), pp. 32-3: Impressionistic criticism is exposed to certain hazards. Impressions differ: the critic may point to objective features but the same features may affect another person in a different way. . . . Where, in Pater's comments on Botticelli's Madonnas, does mere observation of detail end and critical interpretation begin? In practice, we can only measure the critic's impressions against the work itself; and, fortunately, even an interpretation that we cannot wholly accept may still draw our attention to features we had not hitherto noticed.

Representation and "seeing-as" are the dangers for Pater when he is discussing paintings in his writings. They blur the borderlines between art and life, so that in The Renaissance, "The prose of art criticism suggests a reconsideration of the borderlines between the arts and a movement toward a doctrine of synaesthesia".¹⁶ In "The School of Giorgione" and later, Pater is intent upon defining the specific characteristics of different types of art; by clarifying borderlines, he can more easily examine the effect of art upon life, the way that art develops from life. Wollheim includes the familiar concept of the "innocent eye" in this part of his thesis:

it is hard to see how the resemblance that holds between a painting or a drawing and that which it is of would be apparent, or could even be pointed out, to someone who was totally ignorant of the institution or practice of representation. (p. 34)

Pater has moved back from depending upon the representational, or expressive, qualities of paintings when he writes, to examining how art demands an educated eye, and how it can then educate the viewer to look at nature in an artistic way.

When Leneghan comments upon Pater's habit of writing a kind of art lecture, and the reviewer of "Dr. MacDonald's New Novel" condemns the same technique, they both touch upon one of the reasons why Pater includes paintings so much in Imaginary Portraits. Pater's fondness for trying to "make, viz. intellectual theorems seem like the life's essence of the concrete, sensuous objects, from which they have been abstracted" is a desire to contain ideas within sensuous form, yet to allow a freedom which dry abstraction and categorization prevent.¹⁷ Paintings are suited to

¹⁶ Stange, p. 49.

¹⁷ LWP No. 80, discussed in Chapter I.

this. They have a language of their own, which is inaccessible to the writer. Virginia Woolf muses on this independence and containment in Walter Sickert: a conversation.¹⁸ Seven or eight dinner party guests discuss the different approaches to painting which are possible. They comment on the sheer appreciation of colour one can enjoy in Sickert's paintings, the narrative effect of feeling one is looking at a biographical portrait, the silence at the centre of art. One of them says:

Sickert takes his brush, squeezes his tube, looks at the face; and then, cloaked in the divine gift of silence, he paints--lies, paltriness, splendour, depravity, endurance, beauty--it was all there and nobody can say, But his mother's name was Jane not Mary. Not in our time will anyone write a life as Sickert paints it. Words are an impure medium; better far to have been born into the silent kingdom of paint. (p. 13)

The dinner party guests attempt to relate painting to literature, calling Sickert a novelist, but find that although there is a degree of union between the arts, a synaesthesia, there is ultimately an inexpressible element in painting alone:

Why did the red petticoat, the yellow chest of drawers, make us feel something that had nothing to do with the story? We could not say; we could not express in words the effect of those combinations of line and colour. (p. 25)

This discussion of painting as an independent form and as a hybrid, connecting with other forms of art, underlines the visual effects in Imaginary Portraits, where Pater uses the independence of art first of all to present his heroes as spirits of their times, and secondly to communicate ideas through images using "tableaux", scenes primarily visual.

¹⁸ Walter Sickert: a conversation (London: Hogarth Press, 1934).

iii "A Prince of Court Painters"

Imaginary Portraits opens with a portrait written as a diary. This has met with much confusion from critics.¹⁹ It is, however, a signpost of Pater's radically different procedure and aims from the portraits of The Renaissance. By using for the only time as his narrator, a young woman writing her diary, Pater stresses that he is examining how art affects the spectator. The young woman is caused to learn how to understand the difference between nature and art, how to "read" art, and consequently, reality, how to divine meanings and to generalize transience, by several personal factors which Pater creates to make her education unavoidable. She grows up with Watteau, which means that she is present at every development of the man into the artist; she loves him and so notes everything about him and his career; her melancholy frame of mind makes her temperamentally sympathetic to the inner spirit of his paintings; and her traditional background makes her aware of the fashionable yet transient subjects of his paintings and makes her understand the ironies of Watteau's position. By the time she has passed the verdict on Watteau at the end, she has become an artist in the way she can endow his life with meaning. Although there are many factual sources for this portrait, Pater uses the imaginative freedom of the narrator and the personal details to express his ideas about what the artist does to transform life into art, and about life becoming art. He demonstrates too the difference between looking at countryside and looking at a painting, and the similarities. The narrator describes the weather:

¹⁹ It was well received by the reviewers (see Seiler, pp. 168, 173, 184, 187). However, modern critics find it more difficult to accept: see Chapter IV, n. 28.

The sullenness of a long wet day is yielding just now to an outburst of watery sunset, which strikes from the far horizon of this quiet world of ours, over fields and willow-woods, upon the shifty weather-vanes and long-pointed windows of the tower on the square--from which the Angelus is sounding--with a momentary promise of a fine night. (pp. 25-6)

This is a sensitive evocation of nature, of a moment when the light catches and transforms things, and therefore infuses a certain meaning into the scene. Later on, she writes about Watteau's painting Noblesse,

Half in masquerade, playing the drawing-room or garden comedy of life, these persons have upon them, not less than the landscape he composes, and among the accidents of which they group themselves with such a perfect fittingness, a certain light we should seek for in vain upon anything real. For their framework they have around them a veritable architecture--a tree-architecture--of which those moss-grown balusters, termes, statues, fountains, are really but accessories. Only, as I gaze upon those windless afternoons, I find myself always saying to myself involuntarily, 'The evening will be a wet one'. The storm is always brooding through the massy splendour of the trees, above those sun-dried glades or lawns, where delicate children may be trusted thinly clad: and the secular trees themselves will hardly outlast another generation. (pp. 33-4)

Watteau has instilled a permanent "brooding" into the picture, and in capturing the momentary combination of fine and stormy weather, he opens up the possibility of interpretation in the viewer. By juxtaposing an epiphany in nature, and a similar capture of a moment in a painting, Pater demonstrates how close Watteau's paintings come to the reality of nature. But his observations do not exist on a theoretical plane: they are woven into an imaginative piece of writing, so that the autonomy of the painting Noblesse becomes less important than its presence in "A Prince of Court Painters". The narrator's description of the weather directs the attention towards the church "from which the Angelus is sounding", illuminated by the hope of an albeit "watery" sunset. This expresses the narrator's piety and the succour she finds in the church after her disappointments in life. Watteau's painting, on the other hand, portrays "secular trees", and his vision leads to a depressed future

"always brooding" behind the beauty of the moment. This conveys Watteau's insecure and transient grasp of the ideal, unsustained by religion or tradition. The use of paintings as indices of character or theme is a common technique.²⁰ Here, it fuses art criticism and imaginative writing for Pater, and reduces the autonomy of the paintings discussed. But it is a relatively rare method in Pater's writing, and therefore does not interfere with the more important analysis of art that is present.

The discussion of painters in "A Prince of Court Painters" connects this portrait with the others in the volume. Rubens evokes in Watteau a response "full of a kind of rich sunset with some moving glory within it" (p. 11). The narrator's preference is for a Dutch painter, Peter Porbus:

The patron saints, simple, and standing firmly on either side, present two homely old people to Our Lady enthroned in the midst, with the look and attitude of one for whom, amid her 'glories' (depicted in dim little circular pictures, set in the openings of a chaplet of pale flowers around her) all feelings are over, except a great pitifulness. (p. 12)

Watteau's ideal is rich and sumptuous, reflecting the luxury he seeks in Paris, and the Italianate influence he seeks by longing to travel to Rome. The narrator's preference for a medieval painting shows her close connection with the past, and also her allegiance to the art which truly expresses life in Valenciennes. Watteau never achieves his ideal; the narrator's life ends in "a great pitifulness". Whereas she accommodates herself to circumstances, Watteau aims at greater fulfilment but his aspirations are in vain. Throughout Imaginary Portraits Dutch and

²⁰ This is studied in, for example, John Dixon Hunt, Encounters: Essays on Literature and the Visual Arts (London: Studio Vista, 1971), and more particularly in Jeffrey Meyers, Painting and the Novel (Manchester: Manchester U.P., 1975).

Flemish paintings are imbued with a symbolism which is contrasted with Classical art. Watteau's aspirations are shown to be self-defeating by his favour for Classicism while he is best at the Dutch style of art. To the narrator he even seems personally reminiscent of a Dutch statesman:

There is an air of seemly thought--le bel sérieux--about him, which makes me think of one of those grave old Dutch statesmen in their youth, such as that famous William the Silent. (p. 9)

In "Sebastian van Storck", the portrait devoted to Dutch and Flemish art, Pater is most explicit about what he sees as its greatest characteristic:

Those innumerable genre pieces--conversation, music, play--were in truth the equivalent of novel-reading for that day; its own actual life, in its own proper circumstances, reflected in various degrees of idealisation, with no diminution of the sense of reality (that is to say) but with more and more purged and perfected delightfulness of interest. (p. 99)

In "The School of Giorgione", "genre" art is closely associated with art as a kind of furniture. Watteau's art is often on pieces of furniture. He reflects the Parisian life he observes. Yet unlike Dutch and Flemish painters, Watteau cannot combine the "air of seemly thought" he bears with him, with the life he portrays. The result is a melancholy idealization which lacks robust vitality. His work is ephemeral: this is part of any art which reflects so faithfully the life around it, and Giorgione's work has suffered. But Watteau's also suffers from the transience of the very colours. He lacks the application and patience of Dutch painters which will preserve their paintings:

He would fain begin where that famous master, Gerard Dow, left off, and snatch, as it were, with a single stroke, what in him was the result of infinite patience. . . The old Dutch painter cherished with a kind of piety his colours and pencils. Antony Watteau, on the contrary, will hardly make any preparations for his work at all,

or even clean his palette, in the dead-set he makes at improvisation. 'Tis the contrast perhaps between the staid Dutch genius and the petulant, sparkling French temper of this new era, into which he has thrown himself. Alas! it is already apparent that the result also loses something of longevity, of durability--the colours fading or changing, from the first, somewhat rapidly . . . in pictures the whole effect of which lies in a kind of harmony, the treachery of a single colour must needs involve the failure of the whole to outlast the fleeting grace of those social conjunctions it is meant to perpetuate. (pp. 38-9)

Watteau's art is therefore "genre" art, being a reflection of life and a kind of furniture for people to live with; but it does not fulfil the role of "genre" art, for it does not perpetuate or richly idealize that transient life. As the narrator says,

'tis a pity to incorporate so much of his work, of himself, with objects of use, which must perish by use, or disappear, like our own old furniture, with mere change of fashion. (p. 23)

iv "Denys l'Auxerrois"

R.T. Leneghan comments on the distance between Pater's present and the past tense of many of his characters' experiences.²¹ This he considers a danger. "Denys l'Auxerrois" shows this working most effectively. There are three layers of discourse: the story begins with a scholarly exposition of three French cathedral towns; within this framework Pater introduces the narrator's experiences in Auxerre, and how he came across the tale of Denys; this tale is a second, inner fiction. Thus the individual scenes of Denys's life become remote, frozen in "tableaux". It is the opposite of the fragmented continuous present of Watteau's life. This strengthens the inevitability and hence the mythic elements of the story.

²¹ op. cit., p. 89.

In "Denys l'Auxerrois" Pater is demonstrating his own theory that art can imbue life with coherence and meaning. The narrator discovers a stained glass window in a shop selling "bric-à-brac":

It was not a monotonous display, after the manner of the Parisian dealer, of a stock-in-trade the like of which one has seen many times over, but a discriminate collection of real curiosities. One seemed to recognise a provincial school of taste in various relics of the housekeeping of the last century, with many a gem of earlier times from the old churches and religious houses of the neighbourhood. Among them was a large and brilliant fragment of stained glass which might have come from the cathedral itself. Of the very finest quality in colour and design, it presented a figure not exactly conformable to any recognised ecclesiastical type; and it was clearly part of a series. (pp. 57-8)

The art which offers up the figure of Denys is surrounded by, and is a part of, a whole body of work which is the manifestation of past life in that area of France. The narrator repairs to the priest's house to explore further, where, amid the domestic surroundings of the garden, he sees the tapestry:

A sort of mad vehemence prevails, indeed, throughout the delicate bewilderments of the whole series--giddy dances, wild animals leaping, above all perpetual wreathings of the vine, connecting, like some mazy arabesque, the various presentations of one oft-repeated figure, translated here out of the clear-coloured glass into the sadder, somewhat opaque and earthen hues of the silken threads. The figure was that of the organ-builder himself, a flaxen and flowery creature, sometimes wellnigh naked among the vine-leaves, sometimes muffled in skins against the cold, sometimes in the dress of a monk, but always with a strong impress of real character and incident from the veritable streets of Auxerre. (pp. 59-60)

The tapestry depicts Denys in a series of episodes, sequentially. His figure recurs, each time in a different mode or situation. This visual form of narrative is echoed in "Denys l'Auxerrois", where we are frequently shown "scenes" of Denys. For example, when the new bridge is being blessed,

It was just then that Denys was seen plainly, standing, in all essential features precisely as of old, upon one of the great stones prepared for the foundation of the new building. For a moment he felt the eyes of the people upon him full of this strange humour,

and with characteristic alertness, after a rapid gaze over the gray city in its broad green frame of vineyards, best seen from this spot, flung himself down into the water and disappeared from view where the stream flowed most swiftly below a row of flour-mills. (pp. 83-4)

The number of words denoting sight is noticeable here: "seen plainly", "the eyes of the people", "a rapid gaze", "disappeared from view".

Later, when Denys is reburying his mother, he is portrayed as in a painting:

As he passed through the stony barriers of the place the world around seemed curdled to the centre--all but himself, fighting his way across it, turning now and then right-about from the persistent wind, which dealt so roughly with his blond hair and the purple mantle whirled about him. (p. 85)

The narrator actually builds up the story of Denys from a study of documents and "in repeated examination of the old tapestried designs" (p. 60). The story has its foundations in a visual artifact; Pater makes a virtue of the pictorial nature of his tale. United with this demonstration of the power of art is the story of Denys's developing influence on the artists of Auxerre. The cathedral is enriched by the sudden influx of the freedom which Denys brings. It is the very beginning of the Renaissance as Pater portrays it in The Renaissance:

Certain circumstances however, not wholly explained, led to a somewhat rapid finishing, as it were out of hand, yet with a marvellous fulness at once and grace. Of the result much has perished, or been transferred elsewhere; a portion is still visible in sumptuous relics of stained windows, and, above all, in the reliefs which adorn the western portals, very delicately carved in a fine, firm stone from Tonnerre, of which time has only browned the surface, and which, for early mastery in art, may be compared to the contemporary work of Italy. They come nearer than the art of that age was used to do to the expression of life; with a feeling for reality, in no ignoble form, caught, it might seem, from the ardent and full-veined existence then current in these actual streets and houses. (IP, p. 61)

Pater compares this architecture to Italian art, but does not identify it with it. He immediately emphasizes its close relationship with the life of the town. Denys, then, represents less a specific Classical

influence, than that freedom which is an element in Classicism, and which for the French needs to be fully indigenous to be effective. Denys's origins echo the mythical origins of Dionysus, but they take place in Auxerre, so that he is a true child of the region. When Denys returns from his trip to the East, and brings a wildness to life,

The artists were more delighted than ever, and frequented his company in the little manorial habitation, deserted long since by its owners and haunted . . . Here, surrounded in abundance by the pleasant materials of his trade, the vine-dresser as it were turned pedant and kept school for the various artists, who learned here an art supplementary to their own,--that gay magic, namely, (art or trick) of his existence, till they found themselves grown into a kind of aristocracy, like veritable gens fleur-de-lisés, as they worked together for the decoration of the great church and a hundred other places beside. (pp. 73-4)

This is a stage in culture when refinement comes to the fore, creating an "aristocracy". The third stage of Dionysus/Denys creates in the artists that care for expression, for form, that Pater elsewhere considers of paramount importance:

from this time there was manifest, with no loss of power or effect, a well-assured seriousness, somewhat jealous and exclusive, not so much in the selection of the material on which the arts were to work, as in the precise sort of expression that should be induced upon it. (p. 80)

The development of the spirit of the Renaissance, then, is the development of an increasing care for the formal properties of art once it has become the true expression of life.

v "Sebastian van Storck"

The first half of "Sebastian van Storck" is structured almost entirely in terms of paintings. Every scene and episode is compared to the style of a certain Dutch painter of the seventeenth century. The portrait begins, for example, with "It was a winter-scene, by Adrian van de Velde, or by Isaac van Ostade" (p. 91). This is really more than a comparison.

It is a curious transformation of the reality Pater is describing into another representational medium, painting. Pater goes on to describe it at greater length, in the medium he works in, words:

All the delicate poetry together with all the delicate comfort of the frosty season was in the leafless branches turned to silver, the furred dresses of the skaters, the warmth of the red-brick house-fronts under the gauze of white fog, the gleams of pale sunlight on the cuirasses of the mounted soldiers as they receded into the distance. (p. 91)

But the nomination of the scene as a painting by an historical painter dominates the description, and the details which comprise the description are also visual. Here and throughout the descriptive part of "Sebastian van Storck" Pater is not representing external reality in his writing, but drawing material from another art, painting. The house in which the Storcks live exists primarily, for the purposes of the story, in imaginative historical reality; then we are told that it may be seen in a painting. At the party which Sebastian's father gives, Pater tells us that the guests come to derive inspiration from a true Dutch home for their paintings. They are looking at reality (which we know is created representation) in order to paint the paintings which, external to the imaginary portrait, are the basis for the "reality" which exists within. Even the characters within the story arrange their own thoughts according to paintings. Their ways of thinking, like Pater's, are largely visual. Sebastian's father expresses his ambition for Sebastian to himself in terms of paintings: "Admiral-general of Holland, as painted by Van der Helst, with a marine background by Backhuizen--at moments his father could fancy him so" (p. 110). This method of writing forces us to reappraise the relationship between art and life, between historical fact and imaginative truth.

By crossing the boundaries between art and life in his narrative

technique, Pater also places in sharp relief the nihilism of Sebastian's philosophy. The life of Dutchmen around him is imbued with richness and significance because it is really "genre" art in its entirety.

Sebastian's reactions to art are significant: he cannot really tolerate it, but is forced to because it is a fundament of Dutch life at his time:

Obviously somewhat jealous of his intellectual interests, he loved inanimate nature, it might have been thought, better than man. He cared nothing, indeed, for the warm sandbanks of Wynants, nor for those eerie relics of ancient woodland which survive in Hobbema and Ruysdael, still less for the highly-coloured sceneries of the academic band of Rome, in spite of the escape they provide one into clear breadth of atmosphere. For though Sebastian van Storck refused to travel, he loved the distant--he enjoyed the sense of things seen from a distance, carrying us, as on wide wings of space itself, far out of one's actual surrounding. His preference in the matter of art was, therefore, for those prospects *à vol d'oiseau*--of the caged bird on the wing at last--of which Rubens had the secret, and still more Philip de Koninck, four of whose choicest works occupied the four walls of his chamber--visionary escapes, north, south, east, and west, into a wide-open though, it must be confessed, a somewhat sullen land. (pp. 100-1)

Sebastian rejects all art which portrays humanity, or which views landscape as part of human life. In "The School of Giorgione" Pater talks of "That balance, that modulated unison of landscape and persons--of the human image and its accessories" (p. 160); these are the stuff of Dutch seventeenth-century art, and precisely the qualities from which Sebastian flees. The powers that Pater gives to such "genre" art, of giving meaning to transience, form and soul to visual scenes, coherence to chaotic life, surround a character who will not learn from paintings how to "read" life, how to be an artist in looking at the world. Sebastian does not look to art for a meaning in nature, but for confirmation of his own nihilism.

In "A Prince of Court Painters" Watteau is likened to William the Silent, and this quality of "seemly thought" belongs to Dutch and Flemish art which would truly reflect life, rather than to Watteau's empty

evocations of Paris. Here, again, Sebastian is drawn towards William the Silent:

in truth, the memory of that silent hero had its fascination for the youth. When, about this time, Peter de Keyser, Thomas's brother, unveiled at last his tomb of wrought bronze and marble in the Nieuwe Kerk at Delft, the young Sebastian was one of a small company present, and relished greatly the cold and abstract simplicity of the monument, so conformable to the great, abstract, and unuttered force of the hero who slept beneath. (pp. 96-7)

But Sebastian is not drawn to the public nature of William's energetic personality; the self-denial implicit in such a statesman instead directs him to admiring its "abstract simplicity". Such Dutch statesmen directed their energies outwards, for the good of the people; but Sebastian interprets it as a form of nihilism:

An extreme simplicity in their manner of life, indeed, was characteristic of many a distinguished Hollander--William the Silent, Baruch de Spinoza, the brothers de Witt. But the simplicity of Sebastian van Storck was something different from that, and certainly nothing democratic. His mother thought him like one disembarassing himself carefully, and little by little, of all impediments, habituating himself gradually to make shift with as little as possible, in preparation for a long journey. (pp. 102-3)

This refusal to learn the lessons of art works in two ways at the end of Pater's portrait. Sebastian dies, but he would soon have died anyway, from tuberculosis. Imaginary Portraits has two cases of tuberculosis in it: Watteau and Sebastian. They are both unable to relate entirely to the richness of "genre" art. It is a

disease begotten by the fogs of that country--waters, he observed, not in their place, 'above the firmament'--on people grown somewhat over-delicate in their nature by the effects of modern luxury. (p. 133)

It is a result of unnatural imbalance and of over-refinement, where life is submerged under "modern luxury". Sebastian, therefore, is not a part of the natural world which abounds in humanity. Yet he saves a child; this lonely death fulfils his longing for self-sacrifice, without involving others.

vi "Duke Carl of Rosenmold"

"Duke Carl of Rosenmold" shows a young man willing to appreciate art, and aware of the important role it has to play in life. Yet unlike Sebastian, who cannot escape from the environment of art he lives in, Duke Carl has never benefited from the enrichment of art. He is therefore a demonstration of the failures of the "innocent eye". The art which surrounds him at the court of Rosenmold is notable only for having no connection whatsoever with what little life is current:

human life--its thoughts, its habits, above all, its etiquette--had been put out by no matter of excitement, political or intellectual, ever at all, one might say, at any time. The rambling grand-ducal palace was full to overflowing with furniture, which, useful or useless, was all ornamental, and none of it new. Suppose the various objects, especially the contents of the haunted old lumber-rooms, duly arranged and ticketed, and their Highnesses would have had a historic museum, after which those famed 'Green Vaults' at Dresden would hardly have counted as one of the glories of Augustus the Strong. (pp. 140-1)

It is significantly in one of those "haunted old lumber-rooms" that Duke Carl comes across the poetry of Conrad Celtes. The plea for Apollo to come to Germany was made in 1486; eighteenth-century Germany has different needs. Duke Carl has to invigorate the life of the people as well as the art, which can only truly spring from a lively society. Sebastian's society is full of vigour and strength:

Holland, just then, was reposing on its laurels after its long contest with Spain, in a short period of complete wellbeing, before troubles of another kind should set in . . . The heroism by which the national wellbeing had been achieved was still of recent memory--the air full of its reverberation, and great movement. There was a tradition to be maintained; the sword by no means resting in its sheath. (pp. 95, 96)

Duke Carl's society, on the contrary, is not. He does, however, possess the native vigour to bring life to his society as a first step towards the culture which Goethe was to bring to fruition. When he adopts French culture,

confronting the essentially aged and decrepit graces of his model with his own essentially youthful temper, he invigorated what he borrowed; and with him an aspiration towards the classical ideal, so often hollow and insincere, lost all its affectation. (pp. 143-3)

Pater stresses that Duke Carl is an example of "a really heroic effort of mind at a disadvantage" (p. 150), and as the story progresses, we watch as he dispels some of the languor of Rosenmold. He stages Marivaux's Death of Hannibal, and a musical work called Balder, an Interlude;²² so that "he gladdened others by an intellectual radiance which had ceased to mean warmth or animation for himself" (p. 154). His funeral likewise rouses the people first to grief, and then to indignation at his pretence. But Duke Carl is not in the position to benefit from this increased life; he still longs to travel south. It is only when he has begun this journey that he begins to understand the conditions which are necessary to nurture art:

he began to see that it could be in no other way than by action of informing thought upon the vast accumulated material of which Germany was in possession: art, poetry, fiction, an entire imaginative world, following reasonably upon a deeper understanding of the past, of nature, of one's self--an understanding of all beside through the knowledge of one's self. To understand, would be the indispensable first step towards the enlargement of the great past, of one's little present, by criticism, by imagination. (pp. 168-9)

This comment goes beyond the story of Duke Carl to Pater's convictions about the function and provenance of art for his own times.

vii "Genre" painting

"Duke Carl of Rosenmold" motions towards Pater's present day in the same way that The Renaissance does: through its reference to the achievements

²² Balder, an Interlude is more Teutonic than Classical, and indicates Duke Carl's gradual move towards an art based on his home country. See Gerald Monsman, Pater's Portraits, pp. 131-3 for a discussion of a possible source for this opera: Arnold's poem, "Balder Dead".

of Goethe. But it also brings Imaginary Portraits into the realm of modern topics through its assessment of the type of Classicism which will benefit the nineteenth century. Duke Carl's aspirations towards the Classicism of Greece, Italy, and its later manifestations in France, are misdirected, because they have little relevance for his society and for himself. In the same way, Watteau, Denys and Sebastian are all circumscribed by their Northern European origins; Denys's identity as the god Dionysus is to some extent modified by his existence in the Middle Ages, and Watteau and Sebastian never reach the south. The emphasis on "genre" art is partially explained by the quality Pater discerns in it of reflecting life in all its common and everyday forms: its quality of sympathy, therefore, which he praises in "Botticelli", explores in "Charles Lamb", and portrays as the escape from crippling isolation in "The Child in the House". However, there is another reason. "Genre" art was at the centre of much critical thought in the nineteenth century. To George Eliot it is connected with her humanistic reliance on imaginative sympathy which replaces the faith that has been lost. To others it becomes another imaginative form of history. In Realism Linda Nochlin comments on the new kind of "History Painting" which developed in the mid-nineteenth century:

Painters did not cease to paint subjects from Greek and Roman history: far from it. And certain critics urged a return to the appropriate 'grand manner'. But what they now produced were, for the most part, historical genre paintings: scenes from the everyday life of Greece and Rome, scrupulously accurate in costume and setting, and as devoid of elevated sentiment as of noble form. . . . History and value, history and faith, which had been inseparable since the earliest creation myths and integrated in the doctrine of the Christian Church, were irremediably torn asunder by the Higher Criticism and the New Geology. What was left was history as the facts, in a vast landscape extending from the mists of prehistoric times to the Comtean precincts of present-day experience. Fernand Cormon's The Stone Age, Alma-Tadema's Apodyterium, Gérôme's Louis XIV and Molière at Dinner, and Renoir's Le Moulin de la Galette--unlikely companions though they may be from a purely aesthetic standpoint--are vivid examples of

this newly expanded historical sense. All four paintings share a common attempt to place the daily life of a given chronological period in a convincing and objectively accurate milieu. 23

Here the emphasis is on that history of facts which Pater rejects. But the overturning of traditional history extended time so far that the facts which were pursued were now experienced facts, the life of the common people. Linda Nochlin quotes Hippolyte Taine:

'Give up the theory of constitutions and their mechanism, of religions and their system . . . and try to see men in their workshops, in their offices, in their fields, with their sky, their earth, their houses, their dress, tillage, meals, as you do when, landing in England or Italy, you remark faces and gestures, roads and inns, a citizen taking his walk, a workman drinking'. (p. 23)

In Imaginary Portraits "genre" art is connected with democracy. Denys is associated with "the movement then on foot at Auxerre, as in other French towns, for the liberation of the commune from its old feudal superiors" (p. 68). Sebastian's difference from the statesmen of Holland is defined as "the simplicity of Sebastian van Storck was something different from that, and certainly nothing democratic" (p. 102). Watteau catches the superficial appearance of a democratic way of life:

People talk of a new era now dawning upon the world, of fraternity, liberty, humanity, of a novel sort of social freedom in which men's natural goodness of heart will blossom at a thousand points hitherto repressed, of wars disappearing from the world in an infinite, benevolent ease of life--yes! perhaps of infinite littleness also. And it is the outward manner of that, which, partly by anticipation, and through pure intellectual power, Antony Watteau has caught, together with a flattering something of his own, added thereto. Himself really of the old time which is passing away, the impress of which he carries on his physiognomy--he dignifies, by what in him is neither more or less than a profound melancholy, the essential insignificance of what he wills to touch in all that; transforming its mere pettiness into grace. (pp. 35-6)

Duke Carl rejects the feudal way of life he has inherited by pretending to have died; when he returns to Germany he signifies his appreciation

²³ Realism (London: Penguin, 1971), pp. 23-4, 25.

of life by marrying a peasant girl: "Grand-duke perforce, he would make her his wife, and had already reassured her with caricature of his horrified ministers. 'Go straight to life!' said his new poetic code; and here was the opportunity" (pp. 174-5) This somewhat unexpected emphasis on democracy is not political, for Pater is more concerned with an art of sympathy than with an art of rebellion. He is seeking to connect the life of nineteenth-century man with the past. Despite the Realists' similar favour of democracy, their concern for contemporaneity led them to an art of fragmentation. Baudelaire said, "modernity is the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent".²⁴ From the consensus between Pater and the Realist school of art, divergent solutions developed:

In pre-nineteenth century art, time was never a completely isolated instant but always implied what preceded and what would follow. In classical art and all schemata based upon it, the passage of time is condensed and stabilized by means of a significant kinetic summary.

A realist, like Degas, destroyed this paradigm of temporal continuity in favour of the disjointed temporal fragment. In such a work as the Dancer on the Stage, Degas showed no interest in conveying any ideal image of movement but concentrated on creating the equivalent of a concrete instant of perceived temporal fact--an isolated moment. (Nochlin, p. 30)

In Imaginary Portraits Pater uses the past to offer a cohesive solution for the present. He is in accord with many of his contemporaries about the fragmentation of modern life, but he offers solutions radically different from their celebration of that very chaos. As in his use of both Sir Joshua Reynolds and William Blake in The Renaissance, here he combines a favour for Classicism (rejected out of hand by the Realist school) with an acceptance of the new spirit of democracy. His later statements on contemporary art follow this compromise.

²⁴ Quoted in Nochlin, p. 28.

Imaginary Portraits draws together and uses all the strands of thought which Pater had been exploring in the years between The Renaissance and Marius the Epicurean: imaginative writing, Greek culture, and an increasingly sophisticated analysis of pictorial art. Perhaps the most impressive achievement in the book is Pater's use of Greek mythology and Classicism to discover a mode of art which appears at first to be quite different from the ancient standards. Pater's care for origins leads him to diagnose the ideal art for modern times as one that repeats the genesis of Classical art. Nineteenth-century life therefore creates an art at once "Classical" and yet based on "genre" and democracy. On the other hand, the adoption of the principles of Greek sculpture leads to a "typification" of his heroes.

The use of art and paintings as referents in all four "portraits" is not a merging of the boundaries between literature and art, but a closer definition of the differences between them. In "A Prince of Court Painters" we see how art affects the viewer; in "Denys l'Auxerrois" how it can create a significance which life would otherwise ignore. "Sebastian van Storck" and "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" illustrate the two extremes of refusing to follow the lessons of art and of being unable to do so because of a lack of familiarity with the conventions of art: Sebastian rejects the association of art and life, while Duke Carl confuses art with life and does not realize that he must invigorate life before seeking art. These lessons are incorporated in the text by Pater, who continually presents to the reader "tableaux", scenes, full of significance and arrested time; his aim, we recall, was to "present not an action, a story: but a character, personality, revealed, especially, in outward detail".²⁵

²⁵ Quoted in d'Hangest, II, 45.

Pater's work resembles much that was current at his time: the ideas of Henry James, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy; the philosophy of the Realist painters. This is explained by his responsiveness to contemporary anxieties about the loss of faith and the corresponding incoherency of historical time, the search for a transcendent ideal even in the realms of Realist fiction, the care for human sympathy. But in "The School of Giorgione" and in the discussion of art in Imaginary Portraits, he diverges from all these like-minded contemporaries. Embroidering generously on his statement in the "Conclusion" that art is the only salvation for isolated modern man, Pater seeks to show how it works to endow life with meaning and temporal coherence. As the narrator says of Watteau's paintings:

Besides that unreal, imaginary light upon these scenes and persons, which is pure gift of his, there was a light, a poetry, in those persons and things themselves, close at hand, we had not seen. He has enabled us to see it: we are so much the better-off thereby, and I, for one, the better. The world he sets before us so engagingly has its care for purity, its cleanly preferences, in what one is to see--in the outsides of things--and there is something, a sign, a memento, at the least, of what makes life really valuable, even in that. There, is my simple notion, wholly womanly perhaps, but which I may hold by, of the purpose of the arts. (pp. 34-5)

CHAPTER VI

Gaston de Latour: implications of symbolism

I remember hearing [Pater] say that, as he grew older, books interested him less and less, pictures delighted him more and more.

Arthur Symons, A Study of Walter Pater, pp. 23-4.

i From "Genre" Art to Symbolism

There may seem at first to be a contradiction between Pater's quest for the ideal and the "typification" of the heroes of Imaginary Portraits on the one hand, and his celebration of "genre" painting and emphasis on the freedom and vigour of multifarious life, on the other. Dutch seventeenth-century painting would appear to be a straightforward manifestation of the latter, as indeed Mario Praz says:

With the exclusion of all transcendental aims, the painter's attention could be devoted to the rendering of material objects with complete and sincere abandonment, to the enjoyment of their richness, their quality, their charm. Hence, in the greatest of these painters (especially in Vermeer), the firm intensity of contemplation that charges the object represented with a fullness of energy undiverted by any metaphysical intention. The portrait-painters did not aim at investing their models with ideal qualities; the models remained in the picture just as they were in life, and their features did not have to conform to any pious or warlike pattern. They remained just what they were, essentially bourgeois. And so, in this school of painting, realism triumphs. ¹

However, in "The School of Giorgione" Pater stresses the mobility of these paintings, which can be carried around and "used". The life is therefore trapped, captured, contained. A certain immobility results; this is reflected in the static narrative of each of the four Imaginary Portraits, where action is frozen into "tableaux". Even in "Duke Carl of Rosenmold", the most active and dynamic of the tales, Duke Carl is continually arrested, placed, like a figure in a Romantic painting.

"Genre" art has another way of containing the multifariousness of life: by transcending the temporal and realist limitations of its form. Praz calls this transcendence "intimism":

Deeper qualities then emerge in this type of painting. Realism is spiritualized through intensity of vision, attaining, in the highest examples, the quality of inwardness and becoming 'intimism'; and,

¹ The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction, transl. Angus Davidson (London: OUP, 1956), p. 2.

since it reproduces the joys of prosperity and peace, it suffuses these paintings with an air of great earthly security: moments of everyday life thus become intimations of eternity. This is true of Terborch, Peter de Hooch, and particularly Vermeer. . . . The feeling of satisfaction produced by the setting, by rare stuffs, polished glass, cunningly arranged objects, becomes ecstatic; the soul of the beholder comes forth from itself and plunges, unreservedly, into the thing seen. A map hanging on a wall, a majolica vase, a pearl in a woman's ear, have, as it were, a Platonic value as archetypes: they are, par excellence, the objects they represent. The transfiguration of everyday things could go no farther. (pp. 3-4)

Praz traces this development from realism to "intimism" in the nineteenth-century novel, a development which he considers to have reached fulfilment in the work of George Eliot and Marcel Proust. George Eliot's programme of realism, expressed in "Amos Barton", Chapter 5, and in Adam Bede, has its roots in her native surroundings and in her literary culture: most notably Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey and his "Preface" to the Lyrical Ballads. Like Wordsworth, she transfigures reality, and "the most ordinary things, by dint of being looked at with intensity, acquire an important significance, an intimate beauty of their own, more profound for the very reason that it is muted" (Praz, p. 375). Like Wordsworth, too, she stresses the importance of childhood experiences. Praz quotes from Daniel Deronda, Chapter 3:

A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of the earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge. (p. 373)

He then observes that Pater's "The Child in the House" was published only two years later, and that it has acquired "an 'inward' or spiritual quality, a quality of 'intimism'" (p. 374). The passage he quotes includes this sentence:

Our susceptibilities, the discovery of our powers, manifold experiences--our various experiences of the coming and going of bodily pain, for instance--belong to this or the other well-remembered place in the material habitation--that little white room with the

window across which the heavy blossoms could beat so peevishly in the wind, with just that particular catch or throb, such a sense of teasing in it, on gusty mornings; and the early habitation thus gradually becomes a sort of material shrine or sanctuary of sentiment; a system of visible symbolism interweaves itself through all our thoughts and passions; and irresistibly, little shapes, voices, accidents--the angle at which the sun in the morning fell on the pillow--become parts of the great chain wherewith we are bound. 2

This connection of Dutch seventeenth-century art, George Eliot's aims of realism and sympathy, and Pater, then, illuminates how Pater reconciles his care for the ideal with his celebration of "genre" art. Ordinary life becomes transfigured into the Platonic ideal; the significance of childhood and everyday life affords visible symbols. Realism has therefore moved from being the expression of multifarious, discrete life, to being the means of forging a contained modern art, and to the symbol.

Once again, "The School of Giorgione" is the central text, introducing Pater's ideas on symbolism. Significantly, Arthur Symonds selects this essay for especial comment in A Study of Walter Pater; in 1899 he was to write the pioneering work, The Symbolist Movement in Literature, which

² Quoted on p. 374, my emphasis. Praz quotes Pater at the beginning of his introductory chapter. The connection that Pater, and Praz, make between Dutch seventeenth-century painting and the novel was noted by Hegel in his Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik (1832), as Praz points out. Given Pater's pervasive debt to Hegel, it is quite likely that this is the origin of his idea here.

frequently echoes and quotes from Pater's works.³ In his Art Poétique (1874), Verlaine proclaims, "De la musique avant toute chose";⁴ in "The School of Giorgione" Pater gives a similar prominence to music. The French symbolists desired the concrete image to suggest a world behind it, while retaining its autonomy; Pater says that landscape can be revealed through art as having "an indwelling solemnity of expression", but that art should also "delight the sense, delight it as directly and sensuously as a fragment of Venetian glass" (Ren, pp. 141, 138). French symbolism had a two-fold aim, to portray ideas and emotions within the poet, and to figure an ideal world;⁵ Pater betrays an ambiguity about where the artistic impulse comes from, the artist's

³ Symons mentions "his essay on Giorgione, in which he came perhaps nearer to a complete and final disentangling of the meaning and functions of the Arts than any writer on aesthetics has yet done" in A Study of Walter Pater, p. 24. On p. 29 he quotes a passage from "The School of Giorgione" which Pater left out when he reprinted the essay:

Who, in some such perfect moment, when the harmony of things inward and outward beat itself out so truly and with a sense of receptivity, with entire inaction on our part, some messenger from the real soul of things must be on his way to one, has not felt the desire to perpetuate all that, just so, to suspend it in every particular circumstance, with the portrait of just that one spray of leaves lifted just so high against the sky, above the well, for ever? A desire how bewildering with the question whether there be indeed any place wherein these desirable moments take permanent refuge. Well! in the school of Giorgione you drink water, perfume, music, lie in receptive humour thus for ever, and the satisfying moment is assured. See also Frank Kermode, Romantic Image (London: Collins, 1971), for a discussion of Symons's The Symbolic Movement in Literature (London: Heinemann, 1899).

⁴ This discussion of French symbolism is indebted to Charles Chadwick's Symbolism (London: Methuen, 1971).

⁵ See Chadwick, p. 6:

Symbolism can, then, be finally said to be an attempt to penetrate beyond reality to a world of ideas, either the ideas within the poet, including his emotions, or the ideas in the Platonic sense that constitute a perfect supernatural world towards which man aspires.

emotion or the momentary combination of light and shade.

Pater's interest in French literature and culture is quite evident to the student of his oeuvre, and has been studied by several critics.⁶ France and French culture are referred to in every single piece of work by Pater except for three: "A Fragment on Measure for Measure", "Browning", and "Hippolytus Veiled". "The School of Giorgione" is heavily influenced by Baudelaire's L'Art Romantique, and in the first version of "Romanticism" many of Pater's comparisons are with Baudelaire.⁷ This particular influence was considerably suppressed by Pater: when "Romanticism" reappears as the "Postscript" to Appreciations, all reference to Baudelaire has been expunged. By April 1886 Pater had embarked upon Gaston de Latour, the second in his projected trilogy. Kenneth Clark suggests that Gaston is the culmination of all Pater's ideas about the French Renaissance;⁸ this is indubitably the case, but other characteristics of Pater's thought are also present. The book echoes Baudelaire: Gaston's discovery of the poetry of Ronsard prompts Gaston to ask himself:

Might that new religion be a religion not altogether of goodness, a profane religion, in spite of its poetic fervours? There were 'flowers of evil', among the rest. It came in part, avowedly, as a kind of consecration of evil, and seemed to give it the beauty of holiness. Rather, good and evil were distinctions inapplicable in proportion as these new interests made themselves felt. (GL, p. 89)

⁶ For example, Arthur Beyer, Walter Paters Beziehungen zur französischen Literatur und Kultur, Studien zur englischen Philologie (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1931); more recently, John Joseph Conlon, "Walter H. Pater and France", Diss. Tufts Univ., 1974.

⁷ "Romanticism" was published in Macmillan's Magazine XXXV, No. 120 (November 1876), 64-70.

⁸ *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

In a recent article Gerald Monsman has pointed out that just as Gaston discovers Ronsard's poetry in his eighteenth year, so Pater was in his eighteenth year when Baudelaire published Les Fleurs du Mal in 1857.⁹ Baudelaire may be said to be the first exponent of symbolism in France; in Gaston de Latour Pater both discusses and deploys symbolism. As a system, it comes under rigorous examination. The reality of turbulent contemporary events is juxtaposed with the culture of Ronsard and Montaigne, the demands of the actual with representations in art. The power, therefore, of art to illuminate reality is examined and questioned. (It is perhaps significant that when Pater discusses French painters--Alphonse Legros in "The School of Giorgione", Watteau in "A Prince of Court Painters"--he addresses precisely this question.) Pater also uses symbolism as a literary technique in Gaston. He shows Gaston's development through a symbolic landscape, and uses the character Gaston as a symbol of the transition in France from medieval to Renaissance culture.¹⁰

ii Gaston de Latour

Gaston de Latour is set in the forty years of the civil war in France, from 1555 to 1595. Many references are made to contemporary events. The cultural life of this period is also very full: architecture and literature were flourishing, and Pater draws freely on both, discussing,

⁹ "Gaston de Latour and Pater's Art of Autobiography", Nineteenth-Century Fiction 33, No. 4 (March 1979), 431.

¹⁰ This is of course close to Pater's adoptive use of Heine's motif, the "Gods in Exile". The character of Gaston is related to this technique rather than to the essentially "modern" characterization of Marius.

for example, the writers Ronsard, Montaigne, Giordano Bruno, and Marguerite de Navarre.¹¹ In the midst of this, Gaston is in some ways another Marius, a sensitive receiving consciousness whose role is to seek and question the best way of life and thought. The opening chapter introduces the themes of sensuous and spiritual values, and of reality and aesthetic modelling, which run through the chapters which were published. Gaston is introduced amid his childhood influences, just as he is taking the first step towards a religious life by receiving the tonsure:

It was like a stream of water crossing unexpectedly a dusty way--
Mirabilia testimonia tua! In psalm and antiphon, inexhaustibly fresh, the soul seemed to be taking refuge, at that undevout hour, from the sordid languor and the mean business of men's lives, in contemplation of the unfaltering vigour of the divine righteousness, which had still those who sought it, not only watchful in the night but alert in the drowsy afternoon. Yes! there was the sheep astray, sicut oris quae periit--the physical world; with its lusty ministers, at work, or sleeping for a while amid the stubble, their faces upturned to the August sun--the world so importunately visible, intruding a little way, with its floating odours, in that semi-circle of heat across the old over-written pavement at the great open door, upon the mysteries within. Seen from the incense-laden sanctuary, where the bishop was assuming one by one the pontifical ornaments, La Beauce, like a many-coloured carpet spread under the great dome, with the white double house-front quivering afar through the heat, though it looked as if you might touch with the hand its distant spaces, was for a moment the unreal thing. Gaston alone, with his mystic preoccupations, by the privilege of youth, seemed to belong to both, and link the visionary company about him to the external scene. (pp. 11-12)

There are two main kinds of vocabulary in this passage, a lively and refreshing one, as in "inexhaustibly fresh", "unfaltering vigour", "watchful", "alert", "lusty", "importunately", and "quivering"; and an exhausted and weary one, as in "refuge", "sordid languor", "drowsy", "sleeping", "floating odours", and "incense-laden". Both kinds apply to both the religious and secular scenes. Whereas at first, the church is

¹¹ Marguerite de Navarre is discussed in the manuscripts.

bringing renewed life to the world of men, the emphasis shifts when the workers in the field are called "lusty ministers". The church becomes a mysterious, almost artificial presence instead of the life-giving redeemer; but the shift is not a direct inversion, for the workers in the field are imagined at work or "sleeping for a while", and by the end of the paragraph, the countryside has become "for a moment the unreal thing". Yet this syntax suggests that at other times the church is the "unreal thing". Both religious and secular worlds are ambiguous: a discussion commences about the nature of true reality, exhausted mundane life, spiritual regeneration which the church claims is the higher reality ("a stream of water"), and artificial refinement which the church may display in a contrast with the countryside ("incense-laden sanctuary"). The existence of reality, unless it be remodelled artistically or elevated spiritually, is questioned. La Beauce is significantly described as a work of art, "a many-coloured carpet"; it appeals to the senses, but in a rarefied, visual way as if it were an artifact. The church renews symbolically, and the service of consecration prays for spiritual renewal. Gaston's unique ability to encompass both the spiritual and sensuous worlds is significantly indicated at the end of this passage.

The house where Gaston lives is another ancient edifice. Here, the aesthetic remodelling of life causes a refinement by the present of the past. We see the Château first as it would have looked just before the Revolution of 1789, and as Gaston left it at his death in 1594. It is, in fact, "the work, in large measure, of Gaston de Latour" (p. 2). We then see the Château as it came to be built, step by step; first the early house which already existed in the Middle Ages, when the Château

d'Amour was added, "of somewhat finer construction than the rough walls of the older manor" (p. 4). To the narrator, the Château reveals its age and architectural layers only "beneath the delicate, fantastic surfaces of the château of the sixteenth century" (p. 4). The Château d'Amour contains Gabrielle de Latour's room, the most refined in the whole house, and there during Gaston's childhood, Charles IX has left a poem "scratched with a diamond on the window-pane" (p. 18), an exotic addition to an already mysterious place. The house has been in La Beauce "nesting there century after century" (p. 1); it is a manifestation of the values of "the sympathetic ties of human life" (p. 2); to the family it embodies "a memory, touched so solemnly with a conscience of the intimacies of life, its significant events, its contacts and partings, that to themselves it was like a second sacred history" (p. 5). The appeal resides in its long history, and in its changing witness of all the previous members of the family: an appeal, therefore both of stasis and of change.

Gaston's family embodies the traditional and unchanging values of religion and loyalty, but their affections also focus on Gabrielle de Latour's room, to which they go "as to an oratory, a religious place" (p. 25), because of the associations it holds for them of family bonds and affection. However, the actual decoration of this room has the effect upon Gaston of feeding a hunger for beauty which the rest of the Château cannot satisfy. It is decorated "with an effect in some degree anticipating the achievement of Gaston's own century, in which the apparatus of daily life became so eloquent of the moods of those to whom it ministered" (p. 24). Its modernity, therefore, comfortably merged with the virtues of tradition, brings up in muted form the questions of contemporary refinement of the past which pervade the book. It is disturbing as well

as comforting, for it awakens a conflict in Gaston:

To Gaston its influence imparted early a taste for delicate things as being indispensable in all his pleasures to come; and, from the very first, with the appetite for some great distinguishing passion, the peculiar genius of his age seeming already awake spontaneously within him. . . . Conscious of that rudeness in his home, and feeding a strong natural instinct for outward beauty hitherto on what was barely sufficient, he found for himself in this perfumed place the centre of a fanciful world, reaching out to who could tell what refined passages of existence in that great world beyond, of which the echoes seemed to light here amid the stillness (pp. 25-6)

The room is also where a woman died of joy: passion is one of the elements which the "modern" decoration suggests and which stirs Gaston's thoughts. The realm of the spirit is in uneasy relation to the realm of the senses.

Gaston's childhood is not affected by the religious wars, and in this opening chapter contemporary events are muted, appearing only to express the imaginative sympathy and romantic thrill of Gaston when he hears refugees on the road in the middle of the night. Correspondingly, the countryside of La Beauce provides a healing and peaceful atmosphere for the war already incipient in Gaston. The calls of passion and spiritual commitment can lead to universal sympathy, of which the flat nature of La Beauce is the symbol:

Gaston, at least, needed but to go far enough across it for those inward oppositions to cease, which already at times beset him; to feel at one with himself again, under the influence of a scene which had for him something of the character of the sea--its changefulness, its infinity, its pathos in the toiling human life that traversed it. Featureless, if you will, it was always under the guidance of its ample sky. Scowling back sometimes moodily enough, but almost never without a remnant of fine weather, about August it was for the most part cloudless. And then truly, under its blue dome, the great plain would as it were 'laugh and sing', in a kind of absoluteness of sympathy with the sun. 12

¹² This comparison with the sea connects the significance of La Beauce with the many earlier descriptions of the sea. In "The School of Giorgione" Pater's favourite landscape for one actually to "read" as art is that "which has little salient character of its own" (p. 141), so that light and shade work upon it. The landscape of La Beauce, therefore, is ideal for pictorial reading.

However, although Gaston can as yet only vaguely articulate his conflicts, and can still resolve them, the real elements of the struggle are the value of the past against the spirit of the new, the appeal of nature and the degree to which nature can be refined upon by art, and the refinements practised by the church itself and how that relates to the nature around Gaston. In a passage of comment, Pater expresses the struggle succinctly:

Following a long period of quiet progress--the tranquil and tolerant years of the Renaissance--the religious war took possession of, and pushed to strangely confused issues, a society somewhat distraught by an artificial aesthetic culture; and filled with wild passions, wildly-dramatic personalities, a scene already singularly attractive by its artistic beauty. (p. 19)

The Renaissance is not yet fully accomplished when Gaston is growing up--as we see from Pater's analysis in The Renaissance--and the innovations and political turmoil of the sixteenth century have the ambivalent effect of making people "distraught" and of "creating a scene . . . singularly attractive". The question implicitly raised here, in comparison with the effects of external events, is, what effect does art have on people?

The epigraph of Chapter 2, "I had almost said even as they", conveys Gaston's instinctual identification with the life of Chartres Cathedral, and his eventual growing away from it.¹³ The chapter begins and ends with a contrast between Gaston's imaginative ideal of life and the actuality. At the beginning, his idea of Chartres is contrasted with the reality he finds. At the end of the chapter, his way of regarding the onset of winter is succeeded by the events that winter really brings. Both imaginary views are beautiful evocations. Chartres appears "like

¹³ This was the title of the chapter when it was published in Macmillan's Magazine LVIII, No. 335 (July 1888). The title in the posthumously published book is "Our Lady's Church".

a ship for ever a-sail in the distance . . . The busy fancy of Gaston, multiplying this chance hearsay, had set the whole interior in array-- a dim, spacious, fragrant place, afloat with golden lights" (p. 32).

The winter has seemed pleasant because of

the scent of the first wood-fire upon the keen October air; the earth turning from grey to black under the plough; the great stacks of fuel, come down lazily from the woods of La Perche, along the winding Eure; its wholesome perfume; the long, soothing nights, and early twilight. The mind of Gaston, for one, was touched by the sense of some remote and delicate beauty in these things, like magicians' work, like an effect of magic as being extorted from unsuspected sources. (p. 56)

Both imaginary evocations depend upon the senses, and primarily the visual sense. Between the two lies a year during which Gaston is a member of the community of Chartres. Both visions are inaccurate, but while the first is only different from reality, the second is destroyed by war and death. These are what Pater places in opposition to the power of the imagination, and therefore of art, in his discussion of the nature of the symbol.

The Cathedral represents the traditional set of values found in the Château of Deux-Manoirs and in the local church. Its atmosphere is "almost like a funeral--the penitential violet, the wandering taper-light"; the stained glass windows transform the sunlight "into imperious, angry fire" (p. 34). This heavy overlaying of simplicity with artifact is also present in "the mysterious maze traced upon its pavement; its maze-like crypt" (p. 35). It represents the Middle Ages: "The somewhat Gothic soul of Gaston relished there something strange, or even bizarre" (p. 35).

Gaston begins to doubt the absolute straightforwardness which he has hitherto found in his hereditary surroundings. The Cathedral is

itself ministering, by its very shadows, to a certain appetite in the soul of Gaston for dimness--for a dim place like this--such as he had often prefigured to himself, albeit with some suspicion of what might seem a preference for darkness. Physical twilight we most of

us love, in its season. To him, that perpetual twilight came in close identity with its moral or intellectual counterpart, as the welcome requisite for that part of the soul which loves twilight, and is, in truth, never quite at rest out of it, through some congenital uneasiness or distress, perhaps, in its processes of vision. (p. 38)

Gaston responds to the atmosphere through his senses. In his desire to relate the artistic and the spiritual, he equates the sensuous stimuli with the spiritual lesson, and this brings him to an increasing uneasiness about the moral implications of his response. This uneasiness indicates the literal transformation of matter into spirit and conception into form that the medieval church practises (the word "vision" here has the double meaning of visual sense and insight); at the same time it suggests the felicitous version of religion which the light of sixteenth-century culture might encourage. Medieval religion has used art as a mere extension of the spirit with a corresponding loss of spiritual life. In the church service, for example, the pontiff has "full mystic effulgence" while the servers are "like a court, combed, starched, rustling around him" (p. 39). The juxtaposition of symbolic meaning and empty pomp is captured here.

Against this picture of Chartres Cathedral and all it embodies is drawn the present, symbolized by Gaston's contemporaries. They are irreligious, and

Appetite and vanity abounded, but with an abundant superficial grace, befitting a generation which, as by some aesthetic sense in the air, made the most of the pleasant outsides of life. All the various traits of the dying Middle Ages were still in evidence among them, in all their crude effectiveness; only, blent, like rusty old armour wreathed in flowers, with the peculiar fopperies of the time, shrewdly divined from a distance, as happens with competent youth. (pp. 41-2)

Gaston feels the rival claims of the medieval world and the Renaissance precisely in terms of the issue of reality that they pose. To him, they appear identified and polarized as the spiritual and the material,

although both are in fact ambiguous. The Church uses its relics to bring the spiritual conception into the realm of the crudely immediate: to Gaston they "seemed to bring the distant, the impossible, as with tangible evidence of fact, close to one's side" (p. 37), in a way very different from the imaginative sympathy that his family's "relics" evoke. The vignette of Bishop Charles Guillard later in this chapter illustrates the difficulties that this materialism can cause, when religion becomes more material than spiritual. The Bishop has

been brought by maladroitness worldly good-fortune a little too close to its immediate and visible embodiments. From afar, you might trace the divine agency on its way. But to touch, to handle it, with these fleshly hands:--well! for Monseigneur, that was by no means to believe because the thing was 'incredible, or absurd'. (p. 49)

Gaston's growing difficulties about the tenets of this form of religion develop from his thought of the Bishop:

And was it that Gaston too was a less independent ruler of his own mental world than he had fancied, that he derived his impressions of things not directly from them, but mediately from other people's impressions about them, and he needed the pledge of their assents to ratify his own? Only, could that, after all, be a real sun, at which other people's faces were not irradiated? (p. 50)

The mediation which Gaston craves indicates his preference for art over life, for refined interpretation over barer reality. The contemporary world is "untried"; it is full of "human experience", the passion that he wondered about in Chapter 1. It is opposed to his own world of "echoes and shadows". His thought moves to seeking the third, or middle way, "Two worlds, two antagonistic ideals, were in evidence before him. Could a third condition supervene, to mend their discord, or only vex him perhaps, from time to time, with efforts towards an impossible adjustment?" (pp. 47-8) But these questions are still momentary and can be appeased.

As in Chapter 1, Gaston takes refuge in the healing power of the countryside. However, he has to climb a tower in order to find the

liberation, which is no longer spontaneous:

He was become well aware of the power of those familiar influences in restoring equanimity, as he might have used a medicine or a wine. At each ascending storey, as the flight of the birds, the scent of the fields, swept past him, till he stood at last amid the unimpeded light and air of the watch-chamber above the great bells, some coil of perplexity, of unassimilable thought or fact, fell away from him.

14

The sense of reality to which Gaston clings is the basic one of communion with the earth. The implicit connection of earth with death is echoed in the figure of the child, the only other person in Chartres to seek nature, and who is looking forward to his impending death. At the time when the child dies, Gaston is kept away from the healing countryside by the siege of Chartres. The choice for him is therefore annihilation--regaining the peace of nature through death--or participation in external events. This heralds the end of Gaston's childhood, and with his childhood go many of his hereditary values:

As one puts away the toys of childhood, so now he seemed to discard what had been the central influence of his earlier youth, what more than anything else had stirred imagination and brought the consciousness of his own life warm and full. (p. 58)

These opening two chapters introduce the contrasts and tensions around which Pater structures his (unfinished) discussion. He explores them in different ways in each of the following published chapters. The poetry of Ronsard is an example of "modern" poetry, and of the power of art to reveal meaning in reality. The close relationship between art and reality through the symbol (or in Mario Praz's terms, "intimism"), sends the viewer back to reality with an increased understanding. The constant encroachment of contemporary events upon the world of the novel at once

¹⁴ The obstructive syntax of the second sentence here conveys the arduous character of Gaston's quest for nature. For an examination of Pater's similar use of syntax in Marius, see Vernon Lee, "The Handling of Words: a page of Walter Pater".

demonstrates the effects of art (understanding demands participation), and questions the value of art in the face of war and suffering. Montaigne's art, for example, reduces his interest in events around him. Finally, Montaigne's ideas on opinion and truth continue the discussion of art and reality by suggesting that there is no such thing as a common reality or truth: Gaston's experiences during and after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre would seem to prove this.

The first aspect of Ronsard's "new" poetry which strikes Gaston is its vividness and closeness to reality:

it had proved the key to a new world of seemingly boundless intellectual resources, and yet with a special closeness to visible or sensuous things;--the scent and colour of the field-flowers, the amorous business of the birds, the flush and re-fledging of the black earth itself in that fervent springtide. (p. 63)

Gaston has been hoping for a poetry which will be as natural and free as his past communion with nature has been, and which has now failed: he is looking to art to replace nature. The second power of the new poetry is that it idealizes, just as the Church spiritualizes reality, while materialising the unseen:

Things were become at once more deeply sensuous and more deeply ideal. As at the touch of a wizard, something more came into the rose than its own natural blush. Occupied so closely with the visible, this new poetry had so profound an intuition of what can only be felt, and maintained that mood in speaking of such objects as wine, fruit, the plume in the cap, the ring on the finger. And still that was no dubious or generalised form it gave to flower or bird, but the exact pressure of the jay at the window; you could count the petals,--of the exact natural number; no expression could be too faithful to the precise texture of things; words, too, must embroider, be twisted and spun, like silk or golden hair. Here were real people, in their real, delightful attire, and you understood how they moved; the visible was more visible than ever before, just because soul had come to its surface. (pp. 67-8)

This poetry is a fit vehicle for that literal relation between art and soul, spirit and visual artifact, which disturbed Gaston when he made the connection in Chartres Cathedral.

Ronsard's poetry is expressly for Gaston's time in its vividness. It articulates Gaston's own feelings, and talks about "real people, in their real, delightful attire". At the same time it brings meaning to this transience, "transforming his own age and the world about him, presenting its every-day touch, the very trick one knew it by, as an additional grace, asserting the latent poetic rights of the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent".¹⁵ This enables Gaston to appreciate the countryside again, but through Ronsard: "He listened, he looked round freely, but always now with the ear, the eye, of his favourite poet" (p. 69). The freedom to look is the freedom bestowed by art, by moulding reality into an intelligible concept, just as the sixteenth-century architecture in the parish church dispels the "Gothic darkness" which has "some congenital uneasiness or distress, perhaps, in its processes of vision". The new poetry works on reality to make that reality more luminous, whereas the medieval architecture stems from spiritual nebula which consequently produce a mysterious form of art. Ronsard's poetry renews life, making it immediately accessible, but does not discard the old: "he found new words for perennially new things, and the novel accent awakened long-slumbering associations" (p. 70).

In moving away from the Church in his search for a more inclusive system, Gaston is rejecting traditional poetry. And in rejecting tradition, he is in effect willingly involving himself in every aspect of contemporary life. During his journey to Ronsard's home, he perceives how true the poetry is to the neighbouring countryside, but he has also

¹⁵ p. 68. The final phrase here, "the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent", is a quotation from Baudelaire, quoted in Chapter V, from Nochlin, p. 25. This quotation, undetected by Monsman, bears out his argument that Pater's discussion of Ronsard's poetry is a sublimated analysis of Baudelaire's poetry as the poetry of modern life.

been trained by the poetry to think about the moral facts. The suffering caused by war which he sees as he travels jars with his pleasure in nature. First there is a description of the beauty of the countryside:

The hill . . . dropped suddenly upon a vague tract of wood and pasture, with a dark ridge beyond towards the south-west; and the black notch, which broke its outline against the mellow space of evening light, was the steeple of the priory of Croix-val. (p. 73)

There follows a description of the suffering people who haunt the countryside and

Relieved a little by the sentimental humour of the hour, lending, as Ronsard prompted, a poetic and always amorous interest to everything around him, poor Gaston's very human soul was vexed nevertheless at the spectacle of the increased hardness of human life, with certain misgivings from time to time at the contrast of his own luxurious tranquillity. (p. 74)

In having been taught to "read" the countryside in this way, Gaston looks at it as if with the eye of someone looking at a painting. In Chapter 1 Pater describes La Beauce as if it were a picture; now Gaston displays the difference in the spectator's attitude when presented with nature, on the one hand, and art, on the other:

Nay! the most familiar details of nature, its daily routine of light and darkness, beset him now with a kind of troubled and troubling eloquence. The rain, the first streak of dawn, the very sullenness of the sky, had a power, only to be described by saying that they seemed to be moral facts. 16

In Chapter 4 Gaston travels to visit Montaigne. His journey recapitulates all his past conflicts and all the themes of the book. His education from Ronsard is shown in the way he enjoys the countryside: "he traversed a region of unquestioned natural charm, heightened greatly by the mental atmosphere through which it reached him" (p. 96). The contemporary architecture he sees expresses the awakening spirit of the Renaissance:

¹⁶ This is virtually an echo of two passages in "A Prince of Court Painters".

"by its engrafting of exotic grace on homely native forms, [it] spoke of a certain restless aspiration to be what one was not but might become-- the old Gaulish desire to be refined, to be mentally enfranchised by the sprightlier genius of Italy" (p. 97). The vocabulary, "refined", "enfranchised", "airy", "spacious", leads up to the question, "Was there light here in the earth itself?" (p. 97): the same emphasis on light as in the reflections on sixteenth-century church architecture. The episode of Gaston climbing up the tower at Chartres in order to glimpse the countryside becomes another such symbol. Its visual associations and the idea of seeing a vast expanse of distant things unite; Gaston muses on what one can see from this new architecture, as if the mode of life determines the way one looks out on reality from it, and what one sees: "As he passed below, fancy would sometimes credit the outlook from their lofty gables with felicities of combination beyond possibility. What prospects of mountain and sea-shore from those aerial window-seats!" (pp. 97-8) Wholly seduced by the Renaissance spirit, Gaston imagines it can provide both passion and peace, mountain and sea-shore. Pater hints that no way of life can do so, particularly as Gaston is indulging in his habitual idealization. The power of the Renaissance to use art to refine life, to remould life, also becomes ambiguous, for the frequenters of the Châteaux, the court, imitate art so much that they become unreal. They are like "some fantastic company of strolling players" (p. 98). Gaston "had the sense not so much of nearness to the springs of great events, as of the likeness of the whole matter to a stage-play with its ingeniously contrived encounters, or the assortments of a game of chance." (p. 99) Rebounding from this insight into the sterility of Renaissance art when exaggerated, Gaston feels drawn to the sea, a reminder of La Beauce. He relaxes into its comforting naturalness, connecting it with

his family influences: "It was pleasant to sleep as if in the sea's arms" (p. 100). But in escaping from the Renaissance architecture and the signs of war, he only finds the same contemporary influences impinging by the sea, at La Rochelle, where even the sea has turned stagnant. Gaston reflects: "Undoubtedly they were still there, even in this halcyon weather, those causes of disquiet, like the volcanic forces beneath the massive chestnut-woods, spread so calmly through the breathless air." (p. 102) Gaston's conflicts and contemporary events alike are unavoidably present everywhere.¹⁷

The role of the countryside changes as Gaston approaches Montaigne's home. Like the title of the chapter, "Peach-blossom and Wine", it comes to express the gentle yet soporific influence of Montaigne, the southern freedom with its concomitant lassitude. From Montaigne's home, Gaston is impressed by "openness--that all was wide open, searched through by light and warmth and air from the soil" (p. 105). But unlike the châteaux of the Loire, Montaigne is sincere. The view from his tower is not an imaginary ideal, as Gaston's had been from the châteaux, but a real landscape: "He saw, in bird's-eye view, the country he was soon to become closely acquainted with, a country (like its people) of passion and capacity, though at that moment emphatically lazy" (p. 110). The passion and peace which Gaston has longed for is really passion and laziness. Just as the peace Gaston enjoyed in his childhood survived

¹⁷ The long description of the war at this point may transform the war, like the journey, momentarily into a symbol of Gaston's own inner turmoil; France's foreign explorations as an attempt to unify and externalize the country's aspirations may parallel Gaston's own anxiety to resolve tensions by travelling to a new terrain and to Montaigne, looking for escape and resolution simultaneously.

by ignoring the war, so the laziness here embodies a disregard for the turmoil of war. Montaigne's equanimity really results in uninvolvedness, and

Towards the end of life some conscientious pangs seem to have touched Montaigne's singularly humane and sensitive spirit, when he looked back on the long intellectual entertainment he had had, in following, as an inactive spectator, 'the ruin of his country'. (p. 110)

The symbol of Circe in the tapestry in Montaigne's study is another ominous comment. It refers to Montaigne's ability to retain Gaston for nine months, a kind of spiritual rebirth: "Was Circe's castle here? If Circe could turn men into swine, could she also release them again? It was frailty, certainly, that Gaston remained here week after week, scarce knowing why" (pp. 112-3). If Gaston is being bewitched by Montaigne's ideas, he wonders if they have a positive as well as a negative effect, or if they can ever be discarded afterwards. Circe also refers to the bewitching rather than transforming power of Renaissance ideas: art may remould life, but the influence may be malignant, and may be permanent.

In Chapter 5, "Suspended Judgment", Pater moves from the symbolical tracing of Gaston's thoughts to an examination of Montaigne's philosophy and what that means to Gaston. At times Gaston disappears from this chapter altogether; because of Pater's wish to support and discuss his own ideas through Montaigne's, he quotes extensively from the Essais, and his own writing is largely exegesis. The chapter begins with Montaigne's conviction that a universal truth cannot exist, because all men are fundamentally different. This difference extends from human nature to custom and opinion: the relativism which Pater has explored in The Renaissance and in other works is therefore connected with his discussion of art and reality. Morality, being dependent on opinion which is found to be diverse, cannot exist in terms of good and evil. Good and evil can

only have a reality for the individual. In Chapter 3 Gaston has realized that, in moving from religion to art, "good and evil were distinctions inapplicable in proportion as these new interests made themselves felt" (p. 89). This theory goes on to claim that it is justifiable to rely on one's own predilection,

the priceless pearl of truth lying, if anywhere, not in large theoretic apprehension of the general, but in minute vision of the particular; in the perception of the concrete phenomenon, at this particular moment, and from this unique point of view--that for you, this for me --now, but perhaps not then. (pp. 116-7)

Gaston's favour for art over religion, therefore, is supported both by this theory of truth, and by the emphasis on the visual, the particular, the reality, instead of the theoretic, the spiritual: an emphasis on Renaissance modes instead of medieval.¹⁸

The difference between Ronsard's and Montaigne's contributions to culture is succinctly captured in what they teach Gaston to see in the common man, "Jacques Bonhomme". When Gaston is soaked in Ronsard's poetry, "Even Jacques Bonhomme at his labour, or idling for an hour, borrowed from his love, homely as it was, a touch of dignity or grace, and some secret of utterance, which made one think of Italy or Greece" (pp. 70-1). This is the artistic refinement of life: a mode of seeing which beautifies objects. It deals with the subjectivity of the viewer but not that of the object. Montaigne's way of looking achieves an interpenetration, a sympathy, which divines the inner life of the object.

¹⁸ This is also, of course, reminiscent of Pater's comments in The Renaissance:

Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive for us,--for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. (Ren, p. 249)

He sees "that stern self-control with which Jacques Bonhomme goes as usual to his daily labour with a heart tragic for the dead child at home" (p. 120).

Montaigne's ideas on opinion, combining relativism, subjectivity and the concern for truth found everywhere in Pater's writings, are the basis for the next chapter in the book. This was an unpublished manuscript which may not have been revised.¹⁹ It does continue the imagery and themes of the preceding five chapters. If lack of revision is to be detected here, indeed, the lack is evident in the blatancy and over-determination of the themes. To Montaigne,

Things, in respect of themselves, have peradventure their weight, measure, and conditions; but when once we have taken them into us, the soul forms them as she pleases. . . .

For opinion was the projection of individual will, of a native original predilection. Opinions!--they are like the clothes we wear, which warm us, not with their heat, but with ours. Track your way (as he had learned to do) to the remote origin of what looks like folly; at home, on its native soil, it was found to be justifiable, as a proper growth of wisdom. In the vast conflict of taste, preference, conviction, there was no real inconsistency. It was but that the soul looked 'upon things with another eye, and represented them to itself with another kind of face; reason being a tincture almost equally infused into all our manners and opinions; though there never were in the world two opinions exactly alike'. And the practical comment was, not as one might have expected, towards the determination of some common standard of truth amid that infinite variety, but to this effect rather, that . . . these diversities being themselves ultimate, and the priceless pearl of truth lying, if anywhere, not in large theoretic apprehension of the general, but in minute vision of the particular. (pp. 115-6)

The title of Chapter 6, "Shadows of Events", intimates these three strands: the dual nature of events, reality and appearance, and how they interact; the symbolic reflection of Gaston's personal experience in current events,

¹⁹ Charles Shadwell says in his introduction that it is included "only to fill the gap which it was designed to occupy in his scheme, and to indicate the direction which the development of the story would ultimately have taken" (p. vi).

and vice versa; the refinement and obfuscation of reality by art. An historical event, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, is the seed of subsequent differing opinion. The harsh reality of historical events is unclear:

An ambiguity of motive and influence, a confusion of spirit amounting, as we approach the centre of action, to physical madness, encompasses those who are formally responsible for things; and the mist around that great crime, or great 'accident', in which the gala weather of Gaston's coming to Paris broke up, leaving a sullenness behind it to remain for a generation, has never been penetrated. (pp. 145-6)

The "mist" also envelops Gaston's personal experiences. There is "an unfriendly shadow precluding knowledge how certain facts had really gone" (p. 146), and this opening similarity between the Massacre and Gaston's position emphasizes the symbolical use of events in the book. But the chapter does not simply prove the accuracy of Montaigne's ideas. It also questions them. The Massacre actually occurred; it is an historical fact, however much the details may be obscure. Likewise, Gaston's return home and escape from the Massacre is known, by him and by us, to be innocent, yet in popular opinion he has deplorably deserted his wife. These "facts" therefore posit a basic truth which exists regardless of subsequent constructions. The title of the chapter, however, suggests the primacy of "Shadows", and this is underlined at the very beginning, when Pater comments on "how the malignancy of the forces against us may be doubled by their uncertainty and the resultant confusion of one's own mind" (p. 145). Gaston's later attempts to find Colombe only reveal indications "like the traces of wrecked men under deep water" (p. 160). He will never find out what really happened in the Massacre nor what happened to Colombe. Conversely, the appearance of Gaston's actions is reported to him as "the most damaging view of his own conduct", and Colombe believed "that she had been treacherously deserted" (p. 152). The chapter ends

by stressing the inaccuracy of rumour and opinion through Gaston's isolated apprehension of the true events as they appeared to others: "That most mortifying view of his actions had doubtless been further enforced on her by others, the worst possible reading, to her own final discomfiture, of a not unfaithful heart." (p. 163)

The obscurity of what really happened is connected with the theme of seeing clearly, or rather, never being able to see clearly. In Chapter 2, Gaston's predilection to see through the medium of others' perceptions is indicated. He now wishes to see clearly for himself, but is thwarted: "However carefully the critical intelligence in him might trim the balance, his imagination at all events would never be clear of the more plausible construction of events." (p. 148) His imagination is another distorting agent, like opinion, but this time bent upon arranging the details of reality in an artistic form.

Opinion distorts facts in retrospect, but it also obfuscates simultaneously. Pater describes a "mist" or confusion in the air, which prevents distinctive action: "Delirium was in the air . . . It was as if through some unsettlement in the atmospheric medium the objects around no longer acted upon the senses with the normal result" (p. 154). To Gaston, even his marriage seems less like marriage than like transient love, his impulses and motives not in accord with the reality of the marriage contract. The appearance clashes and grates with the reality, both in the Massacre and the marriage. The news of the Massacre reaches Gaston far more concerned with his grandfather's death, as "wild news of public disaster".²⁰ It is followed by "Immediate rumour, like

²⁰ Gaston's grandmother dies during the siege of Chartres; his grandfather during the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. This reiteration of the connection between death and external events repeats the choice between annihilation and participation.

subsequent history [which] gave variously the number--the number of thousands--who perished" (p. 160). Such an uncertainty and inaccuracy, which exists simultaneously with action and fact--and even reaches Gaston before any fact, in the guise of rumour--casts doubt on the existence of an independent truth.

This philosophical inquiry into Montaigne's ideas about opinion is paralleled by the discussion throughout the book of the power of art to refine and remould reality, and whether reality does in fact exist unless to be worked upon. In this chapter, though, the discussion takes an unsympathetic turn. The clash between appearance and reality, caused by opinion, descends into incompatibility, where appearance disguises reality. The wedding celebrations of the court, for example, lead shockingly to "their surfeit of blood" (p. 149). The festivities cause Paris to "adorn herself, if with something of artifice, certainly with great completeness, almost to illusion" (p. 152). It significantly covers up the gloom of the Middle Ages, with its artifice, its "gallant disguise". The vocabulary of deception is continued when the marriage and celebrations are called "almost as transitory as a stage-play", a "masquerade", a "mimic paradise". Pater conveys the shock of the outcome of all this, the Massacre, by concluding this paragraph of description with the King's "iron purpose, while the gutters ran blood" (p. 152). The court's use of art, as in Chapter 4, is artificial and deceptive. It is followed by the reality, but in some sense causes the bloodshed: the ensuing observation is that the artifice might be deemed by a "less than Machiavellian cunning" to be hollow and insincere. The reference to Machiavelli rebounds upon the protagonists in the court. And Gaston's lack of insight is corrected for us by Pater, who reminds us "that every

public movement, however generous in its tendency, is really flushed to active force by identification with some narrower personal or purely selfish one" (pp. 153-4). While this echoes the subjectivity of Montaigne's analysis of opinion, it also suggests the power and utter miasma of motive, which can never be defined.

Chapter 7, "The Lower Pantheism", was published in Pater's lifetime, but with no reference to its part in Gaston de Latour.²¹ However, its discussion of the philosophy of Giordano Bruno has relevance for the themes in the rest of the book. In the previous (unpublished) chapter the exaggeration of art into a disguise for brutal impulses is suggested; here, Pater turns to the implications of spiritual form, with its diametrically opposed use of reality. The "formula" of this chapter is appropriately symbolized in a religious topos: the festival of Pentecost. This symbol of the bodying forth of the spirit in concrete manifestation is identified with Bruno, who "seemed to be but the instrument of some subtly materialised spiritual force, like that of the old Greek prophets, that 'enthusiasm' he was inclined to set so high, or like impulsive Pentecostal fire" (p. 191). Here Bruno's mission is to bring the spirit of the Renaissance into religion and into France. The process resembles the descent of the Holy Spirit, and also the arrival of Pagan sentiment.

At the beginning of the chapter Henry has returned from Italy to be crowned. Before his succession he was regarded as the epitome of the new Renaissance values: "the gallant feats of his youth, de ses jeunes guerres, his stature, his high-bred beauty, his eloquence, his almost

²¹ It was published under the title "Giordano Bruno Paris 1586" in the Fortnightly Review; the previous chapters had been published in Macmillan's Magazine. See Chapter I, n. 22.

pontifical refinement and grace" (p. 169). But when he returns to be crowned, he is full of the sophistication of Italy, a disappointing exaggeration for his subjects. His artistry converts all reality into a mockery, "satiric", "impious contempt" (p. 170). And his era is the undesirable decadence of the Renaissance: "It was the reign of the Italians just then, a doubly refined, somewhat ash-coloured, Italy in France, more Italian still" (p. 171). Bruno is a part of this Italianate import, but in the way his "Renaissance" mission is cast in terms of the Pentecost, the discussion is focussed on the philosophy of spirit and matter, rather than on the history of cultural tradition. He speaks of the "freedom, the indifference" of the Holy Spirit. His monastic life paradoxically confers the greatest freedom to think, a freedom he is then bringing to the tenets of medieval religion. Bruno's Eroici Furori, with its connection of physical love and the soul's yearning for God, symbolizes this dangerous secularization of spiritual philosophy, this move from moral to aesthetic considerations, from the inner to the outer eye. Pater comments on the dialogue,

Yet if it is after all but a prose comment, it betrays no lack of the natural stuff out of which such mystic transferences must be made . . . and if the colours of love inevitably lose a little of their force and propriety by such deflexion from their earlier purpose, their later intellectual purpose as certainly finds its opportunity thereby, in the matter of borrowed fire and wings. (p. 182)

This ambiguity about which is the informing and which the translating agent, the spiritual or the sensuous, is explicitly questioned by Pater in his description of Bruno's procedure:

Tears, sympathies, tender inspirations, attraction, repulsion, zeal, dryness, recollection, desire:--he finds a place for them all: knows them all well in their unaffected simplicity, while he seeks the secret and secondary, or, as he fancies, the primary, form and purport of each. (pp. 183-4)

"Or, as he fancies": this implies strongly that Pater considers Bruno's philosophy to replace the spiritual with the sensuous, in spite of itself. The new religion does invite sensuous indulgence: "Touch! see! listen! eat freely of all the trees of the garden of Paradise, with the voice of the Lord God literally everywhere!" (p. 189); but Pater stresses that Bruno himself is still essentially religious.

To Bruno, nature becomes the expression of the "idea", or the divine, and looking at nature is equivalent to worship. Indeed, "The work of the divine Spirit, as he conceives it, exalts, inebriates him, till the scientific apprehension seems to take the place of prayer, oblation, communion." (p. 180) The justification of this turn towards nature is precisely because it is not seen for itself, but as the expression of the spiritual. In a succinct contrast, Pater shows the supremacy for Bruno of thought over matter: "The delightful tangle of things!--it would be the delightful task of man's thoughts to disentangle that" (p. 185). This presence of the "idea" within everything physical is the priority for Bruno, and so the title of his discourse, "Shadows of Things", expresses his own philosophy and also Pater's broader discussion of appearance and reality, by echoing the title of the preceding chapter. To Bruno the "shadows" are

The divine imaginations, as seen, darkly, more bearably by weaker faculties, in words, in visible facts, in their shadows merely. According to the doctrine of 'Indifference', indeed, there would be no real distinction between substance and shadow. In regard to man's feeble wit, however, varying degrees of knowledge constituted such a distinction. (p. 197)

This last sentence banishes the confusion between spirit and substance engendered by Pantheism: but it is a religious argument. The dangers of such a philosophy is that religion can become an exaltation of sense--the realm of art--when taken up unquestioningly by, for example, the court.

Gaston's reactions demonstrate the impossibility of this philosophy when regarded as a charter for sensuous indulgence. "What, for instance, might be the proper practical limitations of that telling theory of 'the coincidence, the indifference, of opposites'?" he asks (p. 197). The efforts of religion to encompass sensuous delight ignore the problem of standards of aesthetic taste, for the object is seen as the uncompromising, universal expression of the "idea", and not as the reality to be worked upon by art, selected and refined:

How would Henry, and Margaret of the 'Memoirs', and other susceptible persons then present, read it, especially if the opposition between practical good and evil traversed diametrically another distinction, the 'opposed points' of which, to Gaston for instance, could never by any possibility become 'indifferent',--the distinction, namely, between the precious and the base, aesthetically; between what was right and wrong in the matter of art? (p. 200, my emphasis)

The book fittingly ends on this note of query and of irreconciled opposites. The contrast between art and religion throughout the book has reached an attempt at reconciliation in the philosophy of Bruno; but standards in art and religion differ, because of their differing attitudes towards reality, or nature.

Germain d'Hangest describes and comments on the unpublished manuscripts of Gaston.²² His conclusions of how the book might have ended if it had been completed are interesting:

dans une autre perspective, l'écrivain nous définit ici le rôle de l'art avec une clarté d'expression que peut-être il n'avait encore jamais atteinte; et du même coup, après avoir longuement souligné les dangers et le vide d'une attitude qui persiste à se réclamer de lui, il nous oriente pour finir vers un esthétisme régénéré, vers un esthétisme élargi que rien n'opposerait plus aux intérêts majeurs de l'homme, à ses aspirations morales ou religieuses. 23

²² op. cit., II, 111-29, 363-5.

²³ *ibid.*, II, 129.

This movement towards an aestheticism in touch with and no longer in opposition to social, moral or even "religious" issues has in fact been discernible in Pater's writing for several years before he began to compose Gaston. But it is true to say that Gaston tackles the question of the role of art in a more sustained way than any of his other works--even in its fragmentary state. In 1886 Jean Moréas proclaimed that "la poésie symbolique cherche à vêtir l'idée d'une forme sensible", and to the French symbolists, the Idea, the ideal world beyond reality, was a Platonic concept.²⁴ Throughout his career Pater is concerned with transforming ideas into images; hand in hand with his care for the ideal, the type, goes his emphasis on the sensuous form. "Genre" art therefore achieves a perfect transcendence from mere everyday life into an ideal rendering, while retaining its sympathy with humanity.

In the "Conclusion" to the first edition of The Renaissance Pater says:

High passions give one this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, political or religious enthusiasm, or the 'enthusiasm of humanity'. Only, be sure it is passion, that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake. (SHR, pp. 212-3)

In the third edition, published in January 1888, five months before Gaston began to appear, this has been modified to:

Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion--that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake, has

²⁴ Le Figaro (18 September 1886), quoted in Chadwick, pp. 6-7.

most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake. (Ren, p. 252)

The equation of religion with political enthusiasm, "ecstasy and sorrow of love", and a humanistic sympathy, as another "high passion" has disappeared. However, despite the respectful omission of religion, the third edition as well as the first offers two different interpretations of the role of art. Firstly it advocates an aestheticism in which art is praised at the expense of all other philosophies and social concerns. This is the popular interpretation, and it is not disputed that it is a stronger element in the passage.²⁵ Secondly, though, there is a suggestion that art can replace other systems precisely because it is most fitted to direct and educate the viewer to an increased awareness of life. This second interpretation leads towards symbolism.

In Gaston de Latour Pater explores the line of thought which stresses that art is paramount because it opens a door to meaning. The relationship between reality and art is discussed through the harsh contrasts of Renaissance art and the French religious wars of the sixteenth century. The discussion is never resolved. But the varying attitudes towards it expressed in the few published chapters show how Pater's thoughts on the nature and role of art were not those of a narrow aestheticism. The receptive mind which he advocates in the "Conclusion" is revealed as having the power to see the Platonic "truth" which systems cannot illuminate--through the agency of art. This leads the viewer back to life.

²⁵ It develops into the extreme theories of George Moore, one of Pater's acolytes, in his introduction to his anthology Pure Poetry (London: Nonesuch Press, 1924).

CHAPTER VII

Appreciations: studies in a literary heritage

The consciousness of the wider training and further outlook which fall to the lot of us, the heirs of all the ages, if it has bred in the coarser fibres a brutal certainty of judgment and light of appraisement of all things not to be measured by the yard of sense, has engendered in minds of a different mould a great hesitancy, due to the very vastness of their inherited possessions--a hesitancy which seems to paralyze the happy putting forth of their powers in an hour which lacks that simplicity of affirmation and denial necessary to work out its issues in matters other than practical. Such as these, therefore, retire on themselves and on the stored riches of the past--these at least they may enjoy; but here, too, the problem of life seems insoluble.

Lady Dilke, review of Imaginary Portraits, Athenaeum (25 June 1887); cit. Seiler, pp. 166-7.

i The Position of the Modern Writer

It is evident that by 1888 Pater had explored many interrelated concerns in the books he had published: the problems of modern life, the possible role of Hellenism in contemporary art, the need for diversity as well as restraint, the role of history and how it can be used. His developing care for the autonomy of the individual arts--painting, for instance--enabled him to explore more fully the nature of the education which any art can offer, and to assert confidently the central role which he envisaged for art. In another direction, he explored the uses of imaginative writing and the pursuit of truth; the necessity for sympathy and communion with others.

In 1889 Pater published Appreciations, a compendium of essays on literary topics. In The Renaissance, Imaginary Portraits and Marius he demonstrates the need for writing to offer something to the writer's society: solutions, ways in which the past can help the present day. But the writer himself, as is shown in Pater's habitual quotation from other sources, must locate himself in the literary heritage in which he has found himself. He needs to be secure, to be sure of his origins, beginnings and ends; he has to be in control of the past. Appreciations is Pater's testimony of his position within the literary continuum. Pater had located his personal origins in "The Child in the House", and his personal concern for sympathy and imaginative work in other works written during the same period. This success gave him the confidence to present Imaginary Portraits, a rewriting of history for his times, an enactment of his simultaneous regard for the Hellenistic "type" and for the reflection in art of multifarious life. In Gaston he explored further the uses of the symbol, a topic first touched upon in "Leonardo da Vinci". It seems likely that in 1888 and 1889 Pater felt constrained to examine

once again, in a self-conscious way, the conditions of literary production.

To Pater the features of modern life demand a literature which will reflect individuality and celebrate variety. In "On Wordsworth" he identifies the qualities of introspection and sympathy as being modern; in his review of Symonds's book on Browning in 1887 he generalizes about the position of the modern poet:

The world and all its action, as a show of thought, that is the scope of his work. It makes him pre-eminently a modern poet--a poet of the self-pondering, perfectly educated, modern world, which, having come to the end of all direct and purely external experiences, must necessarily turn for its entertainment to the world within:--

(EG, p. 43)

Here there is a hint that to deal in art with the inner life of man is also forced upon the modern artist because all other themes are exhausted as well as inadequate. In "Style", the opening essay of Appreciations, Pater concerns himself "rather with diction, or with artifices of prose composition, than with that abstract effect, that air and carriage, which the word 'style' has almost insensibly come to stand for", as an early reviewer commented.¹ However, he does discuss the necessity of both mind and soul in literary productions:

By mind, the literary artist reaches us, through static and objective indications of design in his work, legible to all. By soul, he reaches us, somewhat capriciously perhaps, one and not another, through vagrant sympathy and a kind of immediate contact. . . . it is still a characteristic of soul, in this sense of the word, that it does but suggest what can never be uttered, not as being different from, or more obscure than, what actually gets said, but as containing that plenary substance of which there is only one phase or facet in what is there expressed. (App, pp. 22, 24)

While Pater is somewhat equivocal about soul, his emphasis on "sympathy"

¹ William Watson, signed review, Academy, XXXVI (21 December 1889), 399-400; cit. Seiler, p. 206.

and "contact" defines the element of subjectivity and introspection which he consistently advocates.

This becomes clearer in a later essay, "Prosper Mérimée", written in 1890.² Pater begins this essay with a description of Mérimée's historical environment to explain why Mérimée should have written as he did: "After Kant's criticism of the mind, its pretensions to pass beyond the limits of individual experience seemed as dead as those of old French royalty" (MS, p. 1). Therefore what remained for "more energetic souls" was art, passion and science. The constraint of having to turn to these topics, Pater here suggests, causes a lack of proportion: "The vocation of the artist, of the student of life or books, will be realized with something--say! of fanaticism, as an end in itself, unrelated, unassociated" (p. 3). Pater emphasizes that he is not personally implicated in this discussion, by relating it specifically to France. But the dangers are forcefully expressed.

Mérimée reacts to the uncertainty of experience by adopting an ironical stance. His refusal to engage with contemporary problems results in his using fiction as a means of escape: "if the Chronicle of Charles the Ninth provided an escape from the tame circumstances of contemporary life into an impassioned past, Colomba is a measure of the resources for mental alteration which may be found even in the modern age" (pp. 13-14). And at the end of the essay Pater condemns Mérimée for his lack of soul, showing how destructive the contemporary environment can be, despite its opportunities for the artist:

² It was published in The Fortnightly Review, LIV, No. CCLXXXVII (December 1890), 852-64.

For, in truth, this creature of disillusion who had no care for half-lights, and, like his creation, had no atmosphere about him, gifted as he was with pure mind, with the quality which secures flawless literary structure, had, on the other hand, nothing of what we call soul in literature:--hence, also, that singular harshness in his ideal, as if, in theological language, he were incapable of grace. He has none of those subjectivities, colourings, peculiarities of mental refraction, which necessitate varieties of style--could we spare such?--and render the perfections of it no merely negative qualities. (p. 29)

Mérimée's negative qualities demonstrate Pater's sense of the destructiveness of modern life, the threat to man's personality which he expresses in "Poems by William Morris". But Pater's aim here is to convince the reader of his own solution, and of its inevitability as the only positive way of dealing with modern life. Mérimée's "failure" throws into relief the necessity of concentrating on inner realities in art.

In "Leonardo da Vinci" the fact that Leonardo's type of beauty "seems more than that of any other artist to reflect ideas and views and some scheme of the world within" (SHR, p. 91) suggests to some that he anticipated modern thought. Leonardo is a forerunner of Romanticism. In 1876 Pater published "Romanticism", which was later to become the "Postscript" to Appreciations. In this essay he discusses the role of Romanticism for the modern writer, and this is inevitably bound up with his anxieties about the past.

It is in contrast with the terms "classicalism" and "classic" that "romanticism" yields up many of its implications. The Latin word "classicus" came into English in the early seventeenth century as "classic" via its immediate forerunner in French, "classique". "Classical" and "classic" were at first synonyms, and remained so for a long time, in part due to the only formal literary study being for a long time the study of Greek and Roman authors. By the nineteenth century, however,

the difference in meaning between "classical" and "classic" had widened. "Classic" now came to denote excellence, authority, and in some sense, "leading".³ Pater's emphasis on the root meanings of words as a vital part of expanding and purifying the vocabulary--the tools with which the writer works--in "Style", demonstrates his habitual awareness of such links as "classical" with "classic":

And then, as the scholar is nothing without the historic sense, he will be apt to restore not really obsolete or really worn-out words, but the finer edge of words still in use: ascertain, communicate, discover--words like these it has been part of our 'business' to misuse. (App, pp. 12-13)

Pater's description of this etymological approach to vocabulary as "the historic sense" illuminates his own method.

In "Romanticism" Pater quotes from, and uses, Sainte-Beuve's essay "Qu'est-ce qu'un classique?" extensively. Sainte-Beuve begins by juxtaposing the common definition of "classic"--"un auteur ancien, déjà consacré dans l'admiration, et qui fait autorité en son genre" with the Latin etymology.⁴ He suggests that such a limited correlation between "classic" and "classical" is now outdated. His new definition is

un auteur qui a enrichi l'esprit humain, qui en a réellement augmenté le trésor, qui lui a fait un pas de plus, qui a découvert quelque vérité morale non équivoque, ou ressaisi quelque passion éternelle dans ce coeur où tout semblait connu et exploré; qui a rendu sa pensée, son observation ou son invention, sous une forme n'importe laquelle, mais large et grande, fine et sensée, saine et belle en soi; qui a parlé à tous dans un style à lui et qui se trouve aussi celui de tout le monde, dans un style nouveau sans néologisme, nouveau et antique, aisément contemporain de tous les âges. (pp. 66-7)

Sainte-Beuve then quotes Goethe as praising the classical and despising

³ See Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (London: Fontana, 1976), p. 51, and the entry in the Oxford English Dictionary.

⁴ Causeries du Lundi, ed. A.W. Tressler (London: Edward Arnold, 1907), pp. 62-81.

the romantic, and disagrees with Goethe, for, he says, the new "classic" may be revolutionary for a time, in the cause of order and beauty. The first clause of his objection echoes Stendhal's theory of romanticism in Racine et Shakespeare which Pater also quotes; his second clause places Sainte-Beuve's theory within the definition of the "classical" which Pater defends. Indeed, Pater interprets Sainte-Beuve as an advocate of this particular form of the "classical":

in doing this, he develops, [*sic*] in a masterly manner, those qualities of measure, purity, temperance, of which it is the especial function of classical art and literature, whatever meaning, narrower or wider, we attach to the term, to take care. (App, p. 247).

But Pater's dialectical use of Sainte-Beuve and Stendhal--the former to represent "classicism" and the latter to interpret romanticism as a feature of every innovative movement until it ceases to be so--in the cause of formulating his own assessment, obscures Sainte-Beuve's main argument. Pater uses and subverts Sainte-Beuve's essay. For Sainte-Beuve goes on to consider Shakespeare and Pope as received "classics" who are very different. Indeed, Pope disliked Shakespeare. Without raising the problematic opposition of the terms "romantic" and "classical", Sainte-Beuve is, in effect, subsuming both under the qualitative term "classic". In discussing Molière and La Fontaine, too, he points out that neither of them are "classical" but both are "classics".

Sainte-Beuve mentions another feature of the "classic" which is relevant to Pater's thought. He says:

En France, nous n'avons pas eu de grand classique antérieur au siècle de Louis XIV; les Dante et les Shakespeare, ces autorités primitives, auxquelles on revient tôt ou tard dans les jours d'émancipation, nous ont manqué. (p. 74)

He draws up a canon of classics and says of La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère:

Les Solon, les Hésiode, les Théognis, les Job, les Salomon, et pourquoi pas Confucius lui-même? accueilleraient les plus ingénieux modernes, les La Rochefoucauld et les La Bruyère, lesquels se diraient en les écoutant: 'Ils savaient tout ce que nous savons, et, en rajeunissant l'expérience, nous n'avons rien trouvé.' (p. 77)

The distinction between "classical" and "classic" is subtly indicated by Sainte-Beuve despite his reservation that the work of art should be devoted to order and beauty, which places him on the side of classicism. Pater's easy dialectic between Sainte-Beuve and Stendhal is achieved through a convenient misreading of Sainte-Beuve. But, as frequently occurs in Pater's essays, Pater changes his mind about Sainte-Beuve in the course of the essay. The problem of the influence of the classics on later writers is solved by Sainte-Beuve in this way: "Contentons-nous de les sentir, de les pénétrer, de les admirer, et nous, venus si tard, tâchons du moins d'être nous-mêmes. Faisons notre choix dans nos propres instincts" (p. 80). This emphasis on instinct and identity resembles Pater's comment in his review "Browning", where he identifies what remains to be written about as the expression of the inner psychology of man. Consequently, Pater later quotes Sainte-Beuve's new, wider definition of a "classic" to describe the romantic character of Victor Hugo's work:

the habit of noting and distinguishing one's own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds; so that pity is another quality of romanticism. (App, pp. 256-7)

There is an implicit connection between the "classics" discussed in Appreciations and the exploration of classicism and romanticism in the "Postscript", which is prompted by Sainte-Beuve's essay. Pater is considering in this book the two main topics: the heritage of classics and the burden of a literary heritage. Romanticism is the concept which solves both problems. In the "Postscript" Pater defines the role of the

critic:

But in that House Beautiful, which the creative minds of all generations--the artists and those who have treated life in the spirit of art--are always building together, for the refreshment of the human spirit, these oppositions cease; and the Interpreter of the House Beautiful, the true aesthetic critic, uses these divisions, only so far as they enable him to enter into the peculiarities of the objects with which he has to do. (pp. 243-4)

The continuity of history prevents opposition by creating logical succession, so that terms become relative. It is strikingly close to Pater's first fully public statement, in the "Preface" to The Renaissance:

Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness. To define beauty not in the most abstract, but in the most concrete terms possible, not to find a universal formula for it, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics. (SHR, p. vii)

This implies a sense of the changing conditions which affect the production of art: both the power of the Zeitgeist, and the cumulative effect of influence, the combination of which accounts for the different manifestations of art through the ages. The consequence is a respect for relative values, for differing ideas of equal intrinsic importance.

Pater sees romanticism and classicism as principles which are always present in the artistic temperament, but to varying degrees; often they are subject to particular epochs. Romanticism, according to Pater, emerges "when men come to art and poetry, with a deep thirst for intellectual excitement, after a long ennui, or in reaction against the strain of outward, practical things" (App, p. 252). These two phrases express the reactions to influence which take the forms of referring to a remote past in preference to the immediate past (as the Renaissance resorted to Classical antiquity in reaction from the Middle Ages), and

of resorting to a subjective world in the face of external achievement and exhaustion. Pater's definition therefore embraces the concerns of The Renaissance and Appreciations: the excitement after a "long ennui" recalls Pater's description of the awakening spirit of the Renaissance in the Middle Ages; the excitement after "the strain of outward, practical things" his own age, as he describes it in the "Conclusion".⁵

Between the publication of "Romanticism" and its appearance as the "Postscript" in Appreciations, there is a vital difference. As well as minor revisions, the "Postscript" carries a major addition, the final paragraph:

Material for the artist, motives of inspiration, are not yet exhausted: our curious, complex, aspiring age still abounds in subjects for aesthetic manipulation by the literary as well as by other forms of art. For the literary art, at all events, the problem just now is, to induce order upon the contorted, proportionless accumulation of our knowledge and experience, our science and history, our hopes and disillusion, and, in effecting this, to do consciously what has been done hitherto for the most part unconsciously, to write our English language as the Latins wrote theirs, as the French write, as scholars should write. Appealing, as he may, to precedent in this matter, the scholar will still remember that if 'the style is the man' it is also the age: that the nineteenth century too will be found to have had its style, justified by necessity--a style very different, alike from the baldness of an impossible 'Queen Anne' revival, and an incorrect, incondite exuberance, after the mode of Elizabeth: that we can only return to either at the price of an impoverishment of form or matter, or both, although, an intellectually rich age such as ours being necessarily an eclectic one, we may well cultivate some of the excellences of literary types so different as those: that in literature as in other matters it is well to unite as many diverse elements as may be: that the individual writer or artist, certainly, is to be estimated by the number of graces he combines, and his power of interpenetrating them in a given work. To discriminate schools, of art, of literature, is, of course, part of the obvious business of literary criticism: but, in the work of literary production, it is easy to be overmuch occupied concerning them. For, in truth, the legitimate contention is, not of one age or school of literary art against another, but of all successive schools alike, against the stupidity which is dead to the substance,

⁵ Leonardo was subject to both the cultural reawakening and the challenge to extend his art after the influence of his teachers. He therefore forms an example of Romanticism within the Renaissance, and forms the link between the concerns of The Renaissance and those of Appreciations.

and the vulgarity which is dead to form. (pp. 263-4)

This is a committed prescription for contemporary writing, and a full justification of Pater's own practices. The first two sentences discuss what there is left to write; significantly, Pater says that "motives of inspiration are not yet exhausted". He offers two such motives: to impose order on the confused experience of modern times, and to express one's own "hopes and disillusion". His description of the appropriate style also relies on two elements: the personal and the social. The writer should write "as scholars should write", but should remember that his style will also reflect the age in which he is writing. Consequently, a thoughtless imitation of the past is wrong; an eclectic use of the past is necessary, and this should be self-conscious. "Diverse elements" should be united: Pater's emphasis on the style of the age and on the union of disparate elements reiterates his consistent preoccupation with the themes of diversity and restraint. The paragraph ends by rejecting the hierarchical structuring of literature in schools and ages, and advocates instead a relativistic approach. Finally, the problems of cultural development, influence, reaction and exhaustion are momentarily forgotten in an apotheosis of literary art over "the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form".⁶

⁶ In A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950 (London: Cape, 1966), Vol. IV, p. 399, René Wellek quotes Ernst Robert Curtius on this paragraph: a land mark in the history of literary criticism: they signify a breakthrough to a new freedom. The tyranny of Standard Classicism is surmounted. Obedience to the rules and imitation of model authors no longer bestows any right to a good grade. Only the creative minds count. The concept of tradition is not abandoned in consequence, it is transformed. A community of the great authors throughout the centuries must be maintained if a kingdom of the mind is to exist at all. But it can only be the community of creative minds. This is a new kind of selection--a canon if you like, but bound only by the idea of beauty, concerning which we know that its forms change and are renewed. That is why the House Beautiful is never finished and closed. It continues to be built, it remains open.

ii The Literary Essays

Appreciations opens and closes with theoretical essays, "Style" and the "Postscript". Between these, there are nine essays on writers; they fall into four groups: "Wordsworth" and "Coleridge", "Charles Lamb" and "Sir Thomas Browne", the essays on Shakespeare, and two essays on modern literature. "Charles Lamb" and "Sir Thomas Browne" are both chronologically related to Pater's short portraits.⁷ Both essays suggest that these writers are a line of influence to which Pater felt personally subject. Jennifer Uglow comments on "Charles Lamb":

it is clear that Pater felt a personal affinity with Lamb, both as a man and as a writer. His definitions of Lamb's achievement, 'tracking with an attention always alert, the whole process of their production to its starting-point in the deep places of the mind' parallels his own stated critical aim, while the analysis of the latent self-portraiture in the work of all essay writers is an unconscious commentary on the effect produced by his own writing.⁸

She considers that this extreme identification with Lamb reveals a weakness in Pater. It is also, however, symptomatic of Pater's search for a literary heritage which will help and support him. Pater describes the influence and power which Lamb's work holds in spite of its circumscribed aims, in a contrast with the more profound work of Coleridge and Wordsworth:

And yet this very modesty, this unambitious way of conceiving his work, has impressed upon it a certain exceptional enduringness. For of the remarkable English writers contemporary with Lamb, many were greatly pre-occupied with ideas of practice--religious, moral, political--ideas which have since, in some sense or other, entered

⁷ "Charles Lamb" was published in 1878, the year in which Pater wrote both "The Child in the House" and "An English Poet"; "Sir Thomas Browne" was published in May 1886, in between "Sebastian van Storck" and "Denys l'Auxerrois". It is significant that like The Renaissance, Appreciations comprises essays written over a considerable length of time: from 1865 to 1889.

⁸ Walter Pater: Essays on Literature and Art (London: Dent, 1973), p. xix.

permanently into the general consciousness; and, these having no longer any stimulus for a generation provided with a different stock of ideas, the writings of those who spent so much of themselves in their propagation have lost, with posterity, something of what they gained by them in immediate influence. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley even--sharing so largely in the unrest of their own age, and made personally more interesting thereby, yet, of their actual work, surrender more to the mere course of time than some of those who may have seemed to exercise themselves hardly at all in great matters, to have been little serious, or a little indifferent, regarding them. (p. 111)

There is an element of trying to belittle the influence of the great Romantic poets here. There is also an unspoken admission that although their influence may appear less lasting than Lamb's, it has become widespread, for their ideas have "entered permanently into the general consciousness". Lamb's lack of concern for the problems of his own age presents for Pater an ideal of the sanctity of art when undefiled by transient conflict. It may be that, written when Pater had just embarked on imaginative writing, this essay relinquishes the duty of language to express social concerns in favour of a personal expression in the cause of forging a sympathy with others. On the other hand, if Pater is retaining his designation of literature as the expression of social distress, he praises Lamb more because his influence is less inevitable and therefore is open to selection by choice.

Pater compares Lamb's writing with that of Montaigne:

And with him, as with Montaigne, the desire of self-portraiture is, below all more superficial tendencies, the real motive in writing at all--a desire closely connected with that intimacy, that modern subjectivity, which may be called the Montaignesque element in literature. What he designs is to give you himself, to acquaint you with his likeness; but must do this, if at all, indirectly.
(pp. 119-20)

Lamb's form is in the tradition of the occasional essay. Pater's definition of the "essay" here, as disguised self-portraiture, once again blurs the outlines of the essay and imaginative writing. It

reflects the process which Pater was exploring at the time of writing "Charles Lamb", in "The Child in the House" and "An English Poet".

In "Sir Thomas Browne" Pater's dedication of imaginative writing to the services of "boundless sympathy" has changed somewhat into an amalgam of self-expression and the grappling with external issues. The ability of the humourist to attain sympathy is still the main characteristic:

the humourist to whom all the world is but a spectacle in which nothing is really alien from himself, who has hardly a sense of the distinction between great and little among things that are at all, and whose half-pitying, half-amused sympathy is called out especially by the seemingly small interests and traits of character in the things or the people around him. (p. 131)

But Pater here has reservations about the sufficiency of this as an artistic ideal. Browne's scientific interests prompt Pater to an appraisal of his religion, especially against the more rational writings of his contemporaries, Bacon and Hooker. Pater's inference is that Browne is more straightforwardly religious than one would "expect" a man of science to be:

Browne's Religio Medici is designed as the expression of a mind more difficult of belief than that of the mere 'layman', as above described; it is meant for the religion of the man of science. Actually, it is something less to the point, in any balancing of the religious against the worldly view of things, than the religion of the layman, as just now defined. For Browne, in spite of his profession of boisterous doubt, has no real difficulties, and his religion, certainly, nothing of the character of a concession. (p. 140)

One senses a disappointment in Pater that Browne does not rise to the challenges of religious controversy, as Pascal does. This disappointment emerges clearly when he criticizes Browne for being subject to the fallacy of the illusions of one's own mind: "Throw those illusions, those 'idols', into concrete or personal form, suppose them introduced among the other forces of an active intellect, and you have Sir Thomas

Browne himself".⁹ There is a confusion within Pater about how to assess Browne; he concludes his criticism of Browne's simple piety by supporting him--and then immediately changing his mind:

And while one feels that no real logic of fallacies has been achieved by him, one feels still more how little the construction of that branch of logical inquiry really helps men's minds; fallacy, like truth itself, being a matter so dependent on innate gift of apprehension, so extra-logical and personal; the original perception counting for almost everything, the mere inference for so little. . . .

The really stirring poetry of science is not in guesses, or facile divinations about it, but in its larger ascertained truths--the order of infinite space, the slow method and vast results of infinite time. For Browne, however, the sense of poetry which so overmasters his scientific procedure, depends chiefly on its vaguer possibilities. (pp. 154-5)

Two claims--of the intuitive apprehension of truth, and of grappling with issues--are here in conflict. In "Charles Lamb" Pater dismisses Wordsworth and Coleridge swiftly; here, their procedure claims an equal importance beside the subjectivity which Lamb and Browne both exhibit.

Yet an historical justification of Browne's naïveté allows Pater to present him finally as a positive interpreter of an age rapidly leaning towards disillusion and scepticism. Browne's temperament causes him to retain his optimistic religion; it is that same type of temperament which Pater also values as being the key to "boundless sympathy":

not from any want of intellectual power, certainly, but from some inward consideration, some afterthought, from the antecedent gravitation of his own general character--or, will you say? from that unprecipitated infusion of fallacy in him--he fails to draw, unlike almost all the rest of the world, the conclusion ready to hand. (pp. 165-6)

"Charles Lamb" and "Sir Thomas Browne" both express Pater's creation

⁹ The stern tone of this revelation of Browne's self-ignorance may be connected with Pater's immediately preceding piece of work, "Sebastian van Storck", where he examines a personality who also relies on the fallacies of his own mind.

of a literary heritage for himself, but in "Sir Thomas Browne" Pater is moving away from a total identification with his subject. He requires now some expression of cultural conditions, as well as a subjectivity. The fact that "Charles Lamb" precedes "Sir Thomas Browne" in Appreciations, when chronologically one would expect them to be the other way round, attests to Pater's own awareness that the latter extends the former.

The three essays on Shakespeare present a different aspect of Pater's preoccupation with literature of the past. Shakespeare is in every way the writer most likely to cause a sense of the burden of influence in a later aspiring writer. By extracting those elements of Shakespeare's work with which he most strongly identifies, Pater offers an interpretation of Shakespeare which will make his own work an acceptable descendant. Pater's interpretation is therefore extremely limited. All three essays omit the major tragedies and comedies.

In the essay on Measure for Measure Pater detects a romanticism in Shakespeare:

there rose in Shakespere's conception, as there may for the reader, as there certainly would in any good acting of the part, something of that terror, the seeking for which is one of the notes of romanticism in Shakespere and his circle. (p. 185)

The earlier comparison with Webster's White Devil serves to emphasize Shakespeare's interest in the inner world. But what occupies Pater most in this essay are the chances of circumstance and nature, their effect on men's lives, and the relative morality which alone can express such a vision: "Here the very intricacy and subtlety of the moral world itself, the difficulty of just judgment, of judgment that shall not be unjust, are the lesson conveyed" (p. 189). This expresses the generosity and sympathy that are bound up with the humourist's art, and the relative

judgment incumbent upon the historical method of interpretation.

Relativism is unavoidable when the diversity of life is portrayed:

They are the moral judgments of an observer, of one who sits as a spectator, and knows how the threads in the design before him hold together under the surface: they are the judgments of the humourist also, who follows with a half-amused but always pitiful sympathy, the various ways of human disposition, and sees less distance than ordinary men between what are called respectively great and little things. It is not always that poetry can be the exponent of morality; but it is this aspect of morals which it represents most naturally, for this true justice is dependent on just those finer appreciations which poetry cultivates in us the power of making, those peculiar valuations of action and its effect which poetry actually requires. (pp. 190-1)

In the first edition of Appreciations the two essays devoted to modern literature were "Aesthetic Poetry" and "Dante Gabriel Rossetti".

"Aesthetic Poetry" was omitted from later editions. It was the extensively revised first two sections of "Poems by William Morris". E.K. Brown argues convincingly that "Aesthetic Poetry" was omitted because the style is so different from the rest of the essays.¹⁰ In contemporary reviews it was usually the essay to be singled out for adverse comment.¹¹ Certainly, in "Poems by William Morris" Pater was driven to explain the relationship of the claims he is making for Morris and for culture as a whole, in the third section, which became the "Conclusion". Hence "Aesthetic Poetry" raises many questions which it does not in itself answer. Its value lies largely in the way it released in Pater a train of thought about the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and his own age.

"Dante Gabriel Rossetti" was written in 1883, after Pater had fully formulated this train of thought.¹² Pater's grasp and purpose here is

¹⁰ "Pater's Appreciations: A Bibliographical Note", Modern Language Notes, 65 (April 1950), 247-9.

¹¹ See Seiler, pp. 208, 209, 229, 234.

¹² It was first published as an introduction to Rossetti in T.H. Ward's The English Poets, Vol. IV.

much more poised. Pater is alive to the "strangeness" of Rossetti's vision: "His own meaning was always personal and even recondite, in a certain sense learned and casuistical, sometimes complex or obscure" (p. 230). This strangeness becomes a virtue, for it is a result of Rossetti's morbid introspection--which Pater has signified is the direction for modern art to move--and a reflection of Pater's own sense of the cultural environment. It is further justified by Rossetti's "sincerity" and the transparency of his language, which conveys exactly what it is employed to express. His poetry assumes a distinctively unfamiliar character compared with contemporary and past work. Rossetti, then, fulfils Pater's criteria for modern literature: faithful language, strong emotions, introspection and interest in the unconscious, and a challenge to the authority of past writing. Pater says of Rossetti:

a perfect sincerity, taking effect in the deliberate use of the most direct and unconventional expression, for the conveyance of a poetic sense which recognised no conventional standard of what poetry was called upon to be. At a time when poetic originality in England might seem to have had its utmost play, here was certainly one new poet more, with a structure and music of verse, a vocabulary, an accent, unmistakably novel, yet felt to be no mere tricks of manner adopted with a view to forcing attention--an accent which might rather count as the very seal of reality on one man's own proper speech; as that speech itself was the wholly natural expression of certain wonderful things he really felt and saw. (p. 229)

There is an element here of using the occasion of writing about Rossetti's verse to justify Pater's own ideas, by demonstrating them as already in practice: by making the emotional theory appear to be the result of empirical enquiry. There is also an implicit suggestion that Rossetti has already overcome the problem of his literary heritage, a feat which Pater is attempting for himself in other essays in Appreciations. Rossetti has not achieved this consciously, but by virtue of his specific interests and ideas. The closing paragraph draws in some of the virtues

of Rossetti as characteristic literary modes for the present day. It ends with a definition of poetry:

poetry, at all times, exercises two distinct functions: it may reveal, it may unveil to every eye, the ideal aspects of common things, after Gray's way . . . or it may actually add to the number of motives poetic and uncommon in themselves, by the imaginative creation of things that are ideal from their very birth. (p. 242)

Rossetti, says Pater, did the latter. This elevates Rossetti to the highest pinnacle of success, as an innovator, and also justifies poetry as the cultural answer to an ethical problem. It offers the prospect of the ideal in art. And poetry is defined sufficiently widely to embrace all literature of the imagination. An illustration of this is that Pater's only attention to purely poetic functions is his reference to Rossetti's use of the refrain--and he discusses it as being "interruptive".

iii The Definition of Modern Writing

In "Winckelmann" Pater defines music, painting and poetry as the ideal forms of art for his own age. Poetry achieves the effects which Pater's view of his own times requires: "To produce [such effects] in a pre-eminent degree requires all the resources of poetry, language in its most purged form, its remote associations and suggestions, its double and treble lights" (SHR, p. 188). In fact, it is language, and not the genre of poetry, which Pater is celebrating here. This becomes evident when Pater returns to a discussion of poetry:

Let us understand by poetry all literary production which attains the power of giving pleasure by its form as distinct from its matter. Only in this varied literary form can art command that width, variety, delicacy of resources, which will enable it to deal with the conditions of modern life. (SHR, p. 205)

The examples which Pater gives of the power of literary art are Browning's

poetry, and the romances of Goethe and Victor Hugo. In fact, he stresses the variety of the form which enables it to reflect the multifarious nature of modern life. Poetry is not a matter of rhyme, rhythm or metre here: it represents all imaginative literature.

In "Style" Pater expands upon this. Instead of the traditional distinction between poetry and prose, he suggests a more generous analysis of "the literature of fact", on the one hand, and "the literature of the imaginative sense of fact", on the other (App, p. 4). What is significant is his emphasis on truth:

For just in proportion as the writer's aim, consciously or unconsciously, comes to be the transcribing, not of the world, not of mere fact, but of his sense of it, he becomes an artist, his work fine art; and good art (as I hope ultimately to show) in proportion to the truth of his presentment of that sense; as in those humbler or plainer functions of literature also, truth--truth to bare fact, there--is the essence of such artistic quality as they may have. Truth! there can be no merit, no craft at all, without that. And further, all beauty is in the long run only fineness of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within. (p. 6)

In this passage the concept of truth imperceptibly alters from "truth to bare fact" to the wider truth which is a pervasive concern in Pater's writing. It is familiar as the ideal which justifies Pater's progression from the early work of The Renaissance to the accomplished Imaginary Portraits.

However, in Plato and Platonism Pater introduces a more stringent analysis of the literary ideal. It becomes the essay. Anthony Ward says of Pater's ideal of imaginative prose:

It is an ideal which is the logical result of the train of thought he had been committed to since he had reached an impasse in The School of Giorgione, for, in its variety, its many-sidedness, its mixed-lights, the prose ideal reflects the complexity and the multiplicity of the modern experience. It is flexible enough to respond to the contradictory exigencies of the subject matter. It is, indeed, the opposite ideal to that of the image, in that its form is created by the subject matter. It is a humble recognition of the inconstancy

of man's understanding, of his inability to come to absolute truth.¹³

The opposition which Ward creates between the prose ideal and the image, between dialectical reasoning and static portrayal, is central to the understanding of this phase of the development of Pater's thought.

Ward sees it as a logical result of Pater's previous work in Marius, Gaston, and "Style". He says later that "The dialectical method, the essay, embodies in this account the same logical process as the movement of history" (p. 178). But instead of an expressive ideal of language that we have seen in "Winckelmann" and other early essays, the prose ideal has become self-reflexive. Ward says:

on the supposition that experience is constituted out of a dialectic between the Appollonian and Ionian elements, between man and society, between the centripetal and the centrifugal, in which the soul of humanity is gradually emerging, Pater erects his prose ideal. (p. 186)

To Ward, this way of seeing the dialectical method is Pater's final, triumphant conclusion. It comes to express to Pater the whole progress of the world:

What Pater sought was a literary means of reflecting the very structures of intelligence, a way of acting out, externalising, the workings of mind. His final conclusion is that it is the dialogue, the 'dialectical method' which is the unique way. It is the one true method for him, the one perspective which will reveal the reasonable order in events. . . . The One that he sought in the Many Pater finds at last in the method itself of seeking (p. 193).

In his interpretation it is significant that Ward does not include a discussion of Imaginary Portraits or of any of the other, uncollected portraits. He declares,

He was never a writer of fiction; Marius is after all interesting mainly as an historical document rather than as a substantial imaginative work; Gaston de Latour he left unfinished; the Imaginary Portraits are either short stories about the theme of the cyclical nature of history, as represented in the return of the old Gods in

¹³ op. cit., p. 175.

new disguises . . . or they are imaginative criticism . . . Nowhere does Pater show the plastic power which he himself recognises as the prime artistic ability, the capacity to change ideas into images.
(p. 177)

Pater may have been unable to mould ideas into images--although I dispute this--but he did not relinquish this aim until 1893, and the very continuation of this aim shows that he did not want to define truth, but to attain it imaginatively. The fact remains that Pater's work resides in a twilight region, a mixture of genres.

CONCLUSION

Pater's work often appears repetitive or contradictory to the reader. His themes, his heroes, his very phrases all recur, often barely distinguishable from a former manifestation in the work. At the same time, the forms of his writing are diverse and cannot be categorized satisfactorily. This paradox is explained by a study of his literary method. The corruption of many of his texts, the extremely belated scholarship which has only just begun to establish dates with any accuracy, have for a long time obscured the development of his literary method. This development draws its impetus from, and informs, the central concerns of his writing.

Pater's analysis of his present times is pervasive in his work: to him it is a complex, chaotic, and even threatening age. Modern man, he feels, is caught between isolation and constriction in this environment. He suggests that modern art should be expressive of this complexity, and should portray individuality and introspection. At the same time, the modern age requires a containing force which will prevent dissolution. Pater's uses of the past comprise a thematic study of similar ages of transition, in The Renaissance, Marius, Imaginary Portraits and Gaston, and an adoption of Hellenistic techniques of sculpture, which he discusses in the essays collected in Greek Studies, in his method of characterization. The heroes represent, to varying degrees, the forces of change and transition, but are bounded by their typification and lack of individuality. Imaginary Portraits is the height of Pater's achievement, reflecting in Pater's literary method his analysis of modern life, prescriptions for modern writing, and his use of the past and of history, which is rewritten for the benefit of nineteenth-century man.

The complexity of life and its appropriate reflection in art are found

by Pater to be perfectly achieved in Dutch and Flemish "genre" art, which appears frequently as a subject in his writing. This realism calls forth an imaginative sympathy, an extension for modern man who is in danger of being isolated and cut off from others. In "Leonardo da Vinci" Pater praises Leonardo, a forerunner of Romanticism, for creating symbols from the realism of life. To Pater the containment of the "type" and the realism of "genre" art come together in the symbol. In Gaston he explores the implications of the symbol: its effect on the viewer or reader, its uses in his own writing.

Pater is an extremely self-conscious writer, and the concerns in his writing reflect his own anxieties and preoccupations. His sense of the importance of the heritage of the past rebounds upon his own role as writer. The modern writer, he feels, comes at the end of a long line of great writers, and finds that there is very little that is new to write. Pater's work is characterized by extensive borrowings from other writers, and in Appreciations, he examines the modern writer's literary heritage. He consistently misquotes other writers and often does not acknowledge his borrowings: efforts to subvert the past. It is difficult to find a fresh beginning for one's work; Pater continually revises his own work in an effort to achieve originality through form. In "The Child in the House" he returns to his own personal past and finds there a satisfactory origin. This is a central piece because Pater also achieves his literary ideals of sympathy, extension and containment. It heralds the imaginative writing in Marius, Imaginary Portraits and Gaston.

Pater's themes and technical concerns are therefore interrelated. His career is not a straightforward development towards consummate achievement, but a series of fresh beginnings and returns to previous work. Pater's

personal distress and his analysis of his present times are closely connected; the quest for truth is, by his own admission, never consciously ended, the goal is never reached permanently. In Imaginary Portraits he attained a momentary satisfaction, but was constrained to continue and repeat the journey. In his literary method he echoes this.

APPENDIX I

A chronological list of Pater's works

1. The Chant of the Celestial Sailors (poem) w. Spring 1856
2. Inscription for the Life of Walter Pater (poem) w. March 1859
3. "Diaphaneité" w. July 1864
4. "Coleridge's Writings" p. January 1866
5. "Winckelmann" p. January 1867
6. "Poems by William Morris" p. October 1868
7. "Notes on Leonardo da Vinci" p. 1 November 1869
8. "A Fragment on Sandro Botticelli" p. 1 August 1870
9. "Pico della Mirandola" p. 1 October 1871
10. "The Poetry of Michelangelo" p. 1 November 1871
11. "Children in Italian and English Design" p. 15 July 1872
12. "Aucassin and Nicolette" w. 1872
13. "Luca della Robbia" w. 1872
14. "Joachim du Bellay" w. 1872
15. "Preface" w. 1872
16. Studies in the History of the Renaissance p. 15 February 1873
17. "On Wordsworth" p. 1 April 1874
18. "A Fragment on Measure for Measure" p. 1 November 1874
19. "Renaissance in Italy: The Age of Despots" p. 31 July 1875
20. "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone" p. 1 January 1876
1 February 1876
21. "Romanticism" p. November 1876
22. "A Study of Dionysus 1. The Spiritual Form of
Fire and Dew" p. 1 December 1876

23. The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry p. 24 May 1877
24. "The School of Giorgione" p. 1 October 1877
25. "The Bacchanals of Euripides" w. before 1 October 1878
p. May 1889
26. "On Love's Labours Lost" w. April 1878
27. "Imaginary Portraits 1. The Child in the House" p. August 1878
28. "The Character of the Humourist: Charles Lamb" p. 1 October 1878
29. "Imaginary Portraits 2. An English Poet" w. 1878
30. "The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture I The Heroic Age of Greek Art" p. 1 February 1880
31. "The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture II The Age of Graven Images" p. 1 March 1880
32. "The Marbles of Aegina" p. 1 April 1880
33. "Samuel Taylor Coleridge" p. 1880
34. "Love in Idleness" p. 7 March 1883
35. "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" p. 1883
36. "The English School of Painting" p. 25 February 1885
37. Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas p. 4 March 1885
38. "A Prince of Court Painters" p. October 1885
39. Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas p. 12 November 1885
40. "Four Books for Students of English Literature" p. 17 February 1886
41. "Amiel's Journal: The Journal Intime of Henri-Frédéric Amiel" p. 17 March 1886
42. "Sebastian van Storck" p. March 1886
43. "Sir Thomas Browne" p. May 1886
44. "Denys l'Auxerrois" p. October 1886
45. "English at the Universities" p. 27 November 1886
46. "M. Feuillet's 'La Morte'" p. December 1886

47. "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" p. May 1887
48. Imaginary Portraits p. May 1887
49. "Vernon Lee's 'Juvenilia'" p. 5 August 1887
50. "'An Introduction to the Study of Browning' by
Arthur Symons" p. 9 November 1887
51. "M. Lemaître's 'Sérénus, and Other Tales'" p. November 1887
52. The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry p. January 1888
53. "'Robert Elsmere' by Mrs Humphry Ward" p. 28 March 1888
54. Gaston de Latour p. June-October 1888
55. "Their Majesties' Servants" p. 27 June 1888
56. "The Life and Letters of Flaubert" p. 25 August 1888
57. "Style" p. December 1888
58. "'The Complete Poetical Works of Wordsworth'" p. 26 January 1889
59. "'The Complete Poetical Works of Wordsworth'" p. 27 February 1889
60. "A Poet with Something to Say" p. 23 March 1889
61. "Shakespeare's English Kings" p. 5 April 1889
62. "'It is Thyself'" p. 15 April 1889
63. "'Toussaint Galabru'" p. April 1889
64. "An Idyll of the Cevennes" p. 12 June 1889
65. "Giordano Bruno Paris 1586" p. 1 August 1889
66. "Correspondence de Gustave Flaubert Deuxième
Série (1850-1854)" p. 3 August 1889
67. "Hippolytus Veiled: A Study from Euripides" p. August 1889
68. Appreciations: With an Essay on Style p. 15 November 1889
69. "Noticeable Books: 3.-A Century of Revolution" p. December 1889
70. Imaginary Portraits p. March 1890
71. Appreciations: With an Essay on Style p. May 1890

72. "Tales of a Hundred Years Since" p. 16 July 1890
73. "'On Viol and Flute'" p. 29 October 1890
74. "Art Notes in North Italy" p. November 1890
75. "Prosper Mérimée" p. December 1890
76. "A Novel by Mr Oscar Wilde" p. November 1891
77. "The Genius of Plato" p. February 1892
78. "A Chapter on Plato" p. May 1892
79. "Lacedaemon" p. June 1892
80. "Emerald Uthwart" p. June 1892
July 1892
81. Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas p. 10 August 1892
82. "Introduction to The Purgatory of Dante Alighieri" p. 9 September 1892
83. "Raphael" p. October 1892
84. Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures p. 9 February 1893
85. "Mr. George Moore as an Art Critic" p. 10 June 1893
86. "The Age of Athletic Prizemen: A Chapter in
Greek Art" w. before
7 November 1893
p. February 1894
87. "Apollo in Picardy" p. November 1893
88. The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry p. December 1893
89. "Some Great Churches in France 1. Notre-Dame
d'Amiens" p. March 1894
90. "Mr F.W. Bussell" w. March 1894
p. 1896
91. "Some Great Churches in France 2. Vézelay" p. June 1894
92. An Imaginary Portrait p. June 1894
93. "Pascal" p. July 1894
(posthumous)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Pater, Walter. Appreciations: With an Essay on Style. London: Macmillan, 1889.
- " " " " " " ". "The Character of the Humourist: Charles Lamb". Fortnightly Review, XXX, No. CXLII (1 October 1878), 466-74.
- " " " " " " ". "Children in Italian and English Design". Academy, III (15 July 1872), 267-9.
- " " " " " " ". "Coleridge's Writings". Westminster Review, LXXXV, No. LVII (January 1866), 106-32.
- " " " " " " ". "The English School of Painting". Oxford Magazine, III, No. 6 (25 February 1885), 113.
- " " " " " " ". Essays from 'The Guardian'. London: Macmillan, 1910.
- " " " " " " ". Gaston de Latour: An Unfinished Romance. London: Macmillan, 1896.
- " " " " " " ". Greek Studies: A Series of Essays. London: Macmillan, 1895.
- " " " " " " ". Imaginary Portraits. London: Macmillan, 1887.
- " " " " " " ". "Imaginary Portraits 2. An English Poet". Ed. May Ottley. Fortnightly Review, CXXIX (1 April 1931), 433-48.
- " " " " " " ". Letters. Ed. Lawrence Evans. London: OUP, 1970.
- " " " " " " ". Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1885.
- " " " " " " ". Miscellaneous Studies: A Series of Essays. London: Macmillan, 1895.
- " " " " " " ". Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures. London: Macmillan, 1893.
- " " " " " " ". "Poems by William Morris". Westminster Review, XC, No. LXVII (October 1868), 300-12.
- " " " " " " ". The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry. 3rd. ed. London: Macmillan, 1888.
- " " " " " " ". "Romanticism". Macmillan's Magazine, XXXV, No. CCXIV (November 1876), 64-70.

- " " " " " " ". Sketches and Reviews. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1919.
- " " " " " " ". Studies in the History of the Renaissance. London: Macmillan, 1873.
- " " " " " " ". Uncollected Essays. Portland, Maine: T.B. Mosher, 1901.

Secondary Sources

- Allott, Kenneth. "Pater and Arnold". Essays in Criticism, II (1952), 219-21.
- Amiel's Journal: The Journal Intime of Henri-Frédéric Amiel. Transl. Mrs Humphry Ward. London: Macmillan, 1889.
- Appleman, P., ed., et al. 1859: Entering a Year of Crisis. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1959.
- Arnold, Matthew. Complete Prose Works. Ed. R.H. Super. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1960-1977. Vols. I, III, IX, XI.
- " " " " " " " " ". Poems. Ed. Kenneth Allott. London: Longman, 1965.
- "The Art of the High Wire". Rev. of Letters of Walter Pater, ed. Lawrence Evans. Times Literary Supplement, 26 February 1971, pp. 229-31.
- Baker, J.E., ed. The Reinterpretation of Victorian Literature. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1950.
- Bann, Stephen. "The Case for Stokes (and Pater)". PN Review 9, VI, No. 1, 6-9.
- Basford, Kathleen. The Green Man. Ipswich: Brewer, 1978.
- Bate, W.J. The Burden of the Past and the English Poet. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970.
- Beerbohm, Max. Diminuendo. Rept. in Writing of the Nineties, from Wilde to Beerbohm, ed. Derek Stanford. London: Dent, 1971.
- Bellringer, Alan W. "The 'Conclusion' to The Renaissance: Pater's Original Meaning". Prose Studies 1800-1900, I, No. 1 (1977), 45-54.
- Benson, A.C. Walter Pater. London: Macmillan, 1906.
- Beyer, Arthur. Walter Paters Beziehungen zur französischen Literatur und Kultur. Studien zur englischen Philologie. Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1931.
- Bizot, Richard. "Pater and Yeats". EHL, XLIII (Fall 1976), 389-400.
- Blake, William. "Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses". In Complete Writings. Ed. Geoffrey Keynes. London: OUP, 1966, pp. 445-79.

- Chadwick, Charles. Symbolism. London: Methuen, 1971.
- Chandler, Edmund. Pater on Style: An Examination of the essay on 'Style' and the textual history of 'Marius the Epicurean'. Anglistica, XI. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1958.
- Charlesworth, Barbara. Dark Passages: The Decadent Consciousness in Victorian Literature. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965.
- Chew, S.C. "Pater's Quotations". Nation, (New York), 99 (October 1914), 404-5.
- Child, R.C. The Aesthetic of Pater. New York: Wellesley College, 1940.
- Chung, Tso-you. "The Historical Novels of Walter Pater". T'ien Hsia Monthly, V (1937), 477-507.
- Clark, Sir Kenneth, introd. The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry. By Walter Pater. Glasgow: Collins, 1961.
- Clifford, James L. Biography as an Art: Selected Criticism 1560-1960. London: OUP, 1962.
- Cockshut, A.O.J. Truth to Life: The Art of Biography in the Nineteenth Century. London: Collins, 1974.
- Conlon, John Joseph. "Walter H. Pater and France". Diss. Tufts 1974.
- Conrad, Peter. "Rescued from Respectability". Rev. of The Case of Walter Pater, by Michael Levey. Observer, 11 June 1978.
- " " " " " " ". The Victorian Treasure-House. London: Collins, 1973.
- Court, F.E. "Change and Suffering in Pater's Fictional Heroes". Modern Fiction Studies, XIII (Winter 1967-68), 443-53.
- Crane, R.S. "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones". In Perspectives on Fiction. Ed. J.L. Calderwood and H.E. Toliver. New York: OUP, 1968, pp. 303-18.
- Culler, Jonathan. Flaubert: The Uses of Uncertainty. London: Elek, 1974.
- Dale, Peter A. The Victorian Critic and the Idea of History: Carlyle Arnold Pater. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977.
- Dante. L'Inferno. Vol. I of La Divina Commedia. Transl. J.D. Sinclair. London: OUP, 1971.
- Darwin, Charles. The Origin of Species. Ed. J.W. Burrow. London: Penguin, 1968.
- DeLaura, D.J. "Arnold's Imaginative Reason: The Oxford Sources and the Tradition". Prose Studies 1800-1900, I, No. 1 (1977), 7-18.

- Ellmann, Richard. Golden Codgers: Biographical Speculations. London: OUP, 1973.
- Evans, Lawrence. "Walter Pater". In Victorian Prose: A Guide to Research. Ed. D.J. DeLaura. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1973, pp. 323-59.
- Farmer, Albert J. Walter Pater as a Critic of English Literature: A Study of 'Appreciations'. Genoble: Didier & Richard, 1931.
- Ferguson, W.K. The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1948.
- Fishman, Solomon. The Interpretation of Art: Essays on the Art Criticism of John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Clive Bell, Roger Fry and Herbert Read. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1963.
- Flaubert, Gustave. Trois Contes. Paris: Bordas, 1965.
- Fletcher, Ian. Walter Pater. Revd. ed. Harlow: Longman, 1971.
- " " " " " " ". "Why not take Pater seriously?" Rev. of Pater on Style, by Edmund Chandler. Essays in Criticism, IX (1959), 411-18.
- Foucault, Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. London: Tavistock, 1970.
- Frazier, Sloane. "Two Pagan Studies: Pater's 'Denys l'Auxerrois' and 'Apollo in Picardy'". Folklore, LXXXI (1970), 280-85.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. Italian Journey. Transl. W.H. Auden and Elisabeth Mayer. London: Penguin, 1970.
- Gombrich, E.H. Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. London: Phaidon, 1959.
- " " " " " " ". In Search of Cultural History. Oxford: OUP, 1969.
- " " " " " " ". The Story of Art. 11th ed. London: Phaidon, 1966.
- Gordon, J.B. "The Beginnings of Pater's Pilgrimage: A Reading of 'The Child in the House'". Tennessee Studies in Literature, XIII (1968), 17-25.
- " " " " " " ". "The Imaginary Portraits: Walter Pater's Aesthetic Pilgrimage". University Review (Kansas City), XXXV (1968), 29-39.
- " " " " " " ". "Pater's Gioconda Smile: A Reading of 'Emerald Uthwart'". Studies in Short Fiction, VI (1969), 136-43.
- Gosse, Edmund. Critical Kit-Kats. London: Heinemann, 1896.
- Graham, Kenneth. English Criticism of the Novel 1865-1900. Oxford: Clarendon, 1965.

Inman, B.A. "The Organic Structure of Marius the Epicurean". Philological Quarterly, XLI (1962), 475-91.

" " " " " . "Pater's Conception of the Renaissance: From Sources to Personal Ideal". Victorian Newsletter, No. 46 (Spring 1975), 19-24.

" " " " " , compiler. "Walter Pater's Borrowings from the Queen's College Library, the Bodleian Library, the Brasenose College Library, and the Taylor Institution Library, 1860-1894." Typescript, 1977.

James, Henry. The Art of the Novel. Ed. R.P. Blackmur. New York: Scribner, 1934.

" " " " " " . The Portrait of a Lady. London: Penguin, 1963.

" " " " " " . The Wings of the Dove. London: The Bodley Head, 1969.

Johnson, Alan P. "The Italian Renaissance and Some Late Victorians". Victorian Newsletter, No. 36 (Fall 1969), pp. 23-6.

Johnson, Lionel. Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers. London: Matthews, 1911.

Johnson, R.V. Aestheticism. London: Methuen, 1969.

" " " " " " . Walter Pater: A Study of his Critical Outlook and Achievement. Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1961.

Kermode, Frank. The Classic. London: Faber, 1975.

" " " " " " " . Romantic Image. London: Collins, 1971.

" " " " " " " . The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction. New York: OUP, 1967.

Kingley, Charles. Westward Ho! London: Dent, 1976.

Kissane, James. "Victorian Mythology". Victorian Studies, VI (1962), 5-28.

Knickerbocker, W.S. Creative Oxford: Its Influence in Victorian Literature. New York: Syracuse, 1925.

Knoepflmacher, U.C. "Historicism as Fiction: Motion and Rest in the Stories of Walter Pater". Modern Fiction Studies, IX (1963), 139-48.

" " " " " " " " " . "Mutations of the Wordsworthian Child of Nature". In Nature and the Victorian Imagination. Eds. U.C. Knoepflmacher and G.B. Tennyson. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977, pp. 391-425.

" " " " " " " " " . "Pater's Religion of Sanity: Plato and Platonism as a Document of Victorian Unbelief". Victorian Studies, VI (1962), 151-68.

" " " " " " " " " . Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel: George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Samuel Butler. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965.

- Law, Helen. "Pater's Use of Greek Quotations". Modern Language Notes, LVIII (December 1943), 575-85.
- Lee, Vernon. Euphorion: being Studies of the Antique and the Medieval in the Renaissance. 2 vols. London: Unwin, 1884.
- " " " " " ". "The Handling of Words: a page of Walter Pater". Life and Letters, IX (1933), 287-310.
- " " " " " ". Hauntings: Fantastic Stories. London: John Lane, 1892.
- Leneghan, R.T. "Pattern in Walter Pater's Fiction". Studies in Philology, LVIII (January 1961), 69-91.
- Levey, Michael. The Case of Walter Pater. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978.
- Levine, George and William Madden, eds. The Art of Victorian Prose. London: OUP, 1968.
- Lewes, G.H. The Life and Works of Goethe. London: Dent, 1908.
- Lubbock, Percy. The Craft of Fiction. London: Cape, 1921.
- Lyons, Richard S. "The 'Complex, Many-Sided' Unity of The Renaissance". Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, XII (1972), 765-81.
- Mann, Thomas. Letters 1889-1955. Selected and Transl. R. and C. Winston. London: Penguin, 1975.
- McKenzie, Gordon. The Literary Character of Walter Pater. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967.
- Melchiori, Giorgio. The Tightrope Walkers: Studies in Mannerism in Modern English Literature. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956.
- Meredith, George. The Egoist. London: Penguin, 1968.
- Meyers, Jeffrey. Painting and the Novel. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1975.
- Miller, Betty. "Proust and Pater". Letter. Times Literary Supplement, 25 April, 1958, p. 225.
- Millhauser, Milton. "Walter Pater and the Flux". Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XI (1953), 214-23.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo. The Development of Greek Biography. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971.
- Monsman, Gerald C. "Gaston de Latour and Pater's Art of Autobiography". Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XXXIII (March 1979), 411-33.
- " " " " " " " " " " " ". "Old Mortality at Oxford". Studies in Philology, LXVII (1970), 359-89.

- " " " " " ". The Romantic Agony. Transl. Angus Davidson. 2nd ed. London: OUP, 1970.
- Proesler, Hans. Walter Pater und sein Verhältnis zur deutschen Literatur. Freiburg: 1917.
- Rader, Ralph W. and W. Matthews. Autobiography, Biography and the Novel. Los Angeles: W.A. Clark Memorial Library, 1973.
- Reynolds, Sir Joshua. Fifteen Discourses delivered in the Royal Academy 1769-1790. London: Dent. n.d.
- Ricks, Christopher. "Pater, Arnold and misquotation". Times Literary Supplement, 25 November 1977, pp. 1383-5.
- Robson, W.W. "Kipling's Later Stories". In Kipling's Mind and Art. Ed. Andrew Rutherford. London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964, pp. 255-78.
- Roellinger, Francis X. "Intimations of Winckelmann in Pater's 'Diaphaneité'." English Language Notes, II (June 1965), 277-82.
- Rolph, C.H., ed. The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v. Penguin Books Limited. London: Penguin, 1961.
- Rosenblatt, Louise. "The Genesis of Pater's Marius the Epicurean". Comparative Literature, XIV (1962), 242-60.
- Runcie, C.A. "Matthew Arnold's Criticism: a reconstruction". Sydney Studies in English, III (1977-78), 47-58.
- " " " " " ". "Pater's 'Apollo in Picardy' and Mann's 'Death in Venice'." Anglia, LXXXVI (1968), 143-54.
- Ruskin, John. Library Edition of The Works. Eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn. London: George Allen, 1903-1912. Vols. V, VII, VIII, XIX, XXXV.
- Sadock, Geoffrey Johnston. "The Ascent to Humanism: The Contemporary Critical Reception of Walter Pater". Diss, Brown 1974.
- Said, Edward. Beginnings: Intention and Method. New York: Basic Books, 1975.
- Sainte-Beuve, C.A. "Que'est-ce qu'un classique?" In his Causeries du Lundi. Ed. A.W. Tressler. London: Edward Arnold, 1907, pp. 62-81.
- Saturday Review, 25 June 1887, pp. 920-1. Rev. of Imaginary Portraits.
- Scholes, Robert. "Towards a Poetics of Fiction: 4) An Approach through Genre". Novel, II (Winter 1969), 101-11.
- Seiler, R.M., ed. Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Sharp, William. Papers Critical and Reminiscent. London: Heinemann, 1912.

- Temple, Ruth Z. "The Ivory Tower as Lighthouse". In Edwardians and Late Victorians. Ed. Richard Ellmann. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960, pp. 28-49.
- Tennyson, Lord Alfred. Poems and Plays. Ed. T. Herbert Warren, Revd. Frederick Page. London: OUP, 1971.
- Thomas, Edward. Walter Pater: A Critical Study. London: Secker, 1913.
- Tilley, Arthur. The French Wars of Religion. London: SPCK, 1919.
- Trilling, Lionel. The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society. London: Secker & Warburg, 1951.
- " " " " " " " ". Matthew Arnold. London: Allen & Unwin, 1939.
- Tuell, A.K., ed. Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas. By Walter Pater. New York: Macmillan, 1926.
- Turner, Paul. "Pater and Apuleius". Victorian Studies, III (1960), 290-96
- Uglow, Jennifer, introd. Essays on Literature and Art by Walter Pater. London: Dent, 1973.
- Van de Put, A. Walter Pater and the Rosenmold Pedigree. Lingard Papers, n.s. 17: 1934.
- Vasari, Giorgio. The Lives of the Artists. Transl. George Bull. London: Penguin, 1965.
- Virtanen, Reino. Conversations on Dialogue. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Studies, 1977.
- Ward, Anthony. Walter Pater: The Idea in Nature. London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966.
- Ward, Mrs Humphry. "Marius the Epicurean". Macmillan's Magazine, LII (June 1885), 132-9.
- " " " " " " " " " ". Robert Elsmere. London: John Murray, 1914.
- " " " " " " " " " ". A Writer's Recollections. London: Collins, 1918.
- Wellek, René. A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950. Vol. IV. London: Cape, 1966.
- " " " " " " " ". "The Parallelism between Literature and the Arts". English Institute Annual (1942), pp. 29-63.
- " " " " " " " ", and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. London: Peregrine, 1963.
- West, Alick. "Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde". In his The Mountain in the Sunlight: Studies in Conflict and Unity. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1958, pp. 111-53.

